



EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

1870—1910 : HER MAJESTY'S LIFE SINCE "THE
TERRIBLE YEAR." TOGETHER WITH THE STATE-
MENT OF HER CASE · THE EMPEROR'S OWN
STORY OF SEDAN · AN ACCOUNT OF HIS EXILE
AND LAST DAYS · AND REMINISCENCES OF THE
PRINCE IMPERIAL · FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES

By EDWARD LEGGE    

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILE LETTERS

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“ I am left alone, the sole
remnant of a shipwreck ;
which proves how fragile
and vain are the grandeurs
of this world . . .

“ I cannot even die ; and
God, in His infinite mercy,
will give me a hundred
years of life.”—EUGÉNIE.

PREFACE

“It is all very beautiful—for the moment,” said Alfred de Musset, as he descended the stairs at the Tuileries one night, “but I would not give two sous for the last act!” And the Empress Eugénie, when asked, at the Hôtel Continental, if she would receive some comparative strangers, is credited with replying: “They only come from curiosity; they want to see the fifth act!”

Of some of the scenes comprising “the last act,” I was an insignificant spectator. One was the illusory French “victory” at Saarbrücken, when the boy-Prince first saw the realities of war; another, the day long combat round Sedan, described in these pages by the Emperor Napoleon himself. I owe this document to the good offices of M. Adrien Hébrard, Editor of the *Temps*.

To M. Gaston Calmette, Editor of the *Figaro*, I am doubly indebted: first, for his eloquent and convincing defence of the Empress Eugénie; and, next, for M. Lucien Alphonse Daudet’s picture of the Empress in her Hampshire home—a romantic narrative, fascinating alike by its poetical charm and its verisimilitude, and worthy of the distinguished name of its creator.

Yet another eminent Parisian has largely contributed to make the volume something more than an ephemeral production; this is M. Arthur Meyer, Editor of the *Gaulois*, to whose kindness I owe the privilege of printing Comte Fleury’s vivid narratives of the Emperor at

Sedan and at Wilhelmshöhe, written from the notes, letters, and conversations of his celebrated father, the General, whose name is treasured by many, His Majesty the King included.

Nor must I omit to pay tribute to M. le Comte d'Hérisson, M. Alfred Darimon, M. Pierre de Lano, M. James de Chambrier, and the Comte de La Chapelle, from whose painstaking historical works I have cited valuable information—unobtainable elsewhere, after the lapse of many years—bearing upon the lives of the illustrious exiles in England. M. Augustin Filon shows us, as none but himself could show, his much-loved little pupil, the Prince Imperial, long ere the Emperor and Empress dreamt that Lowell's dread warning,

“A shout from Paris, and thy Crown flies off!”

would one day apply to them as it had applied to another Sovereign of France, Louis Philippe.

Thirty-seven years after the event, Dr. Debout d'Estrées, a well-known practitioner at Contrexéville and Nice, generously contributes important evidence concerning the precise cause of the death of Napoleon III., and records the advice given by Sir William Gull to the Emperor not to submit to an operation. The Emperor disregarded the warning; and Dr. Debout d'Estrées now assures us that His Majesty's death resulted from blood-poisoning—not, as the Comte de La Chapelle asserted, from “an overdose of chloral” administered, at the request of some of the doctors, to induce sleep.

I enjoyed from the day of the Emperor's death the friendship of the late Monsignor Goddard, of St. Mary's Church, Chislehurst, to whom the Emperor confided the religious education of the Prince Imperial. The boy

"was as a son to me," said the worthy priest. To Mr. George Goddard (one of his two brothers) I owe the numerous "papers" left by the Monsignor; and I gratefully acknowledge the gift. Among the documents were the original letters written to the priest by, and on behalf of, the Empress, and some addressed to the priest by the Prince Imperial.

I informed M. Franceschini Pietri, the Empress Eugénie's secretary, precisely how I had become possessed of this imperial correspondence, adding that, should the Empress disapprove of the publication of any part of it, I desired to present the whole of the letters to Her Majesty. Had my offer been accepted, none of the letters would have been published. But it was not accepted; nor was it communicated to the Empress, for a reason explained in M. Pietri's courteous letter to me which is printed elsewhere. Every letter written by and for the Empress to Monsignor Goddard reveals the imperial lady's kindly feeling and unfailing generosity. Those who have passed harsh judgments upon her will be softened by them; and for that reason I am glad that the responsibility of giving them to the world was imposed upon me. Monsignor Goddard's will, I was informed by the solicitors, Messrs. Russell and Arnholz, 3, Great Winchester Street, contained no reference to these letters or to any other of his "papers."

Remembering how often he had expressed to me his dislike of "interviewers," I was agreeably surprised at finding among the Monsignor's manuscripts one boldly headed, "My First Interview with the Empress Eugénie," which now sees the light nearly forty years after it was written. At the end of February, 1910, there appeared in the Paris *Matin* "a conversation

with the Empress Eugénie," recorded by the well-known Italian journalist, M. Antonio Scarfoglio; and, by the courteous permission of the Editor of the *Matin* and of M. Scarfoglio, I have been able to give some extracts from this literary *tour de force*. M. Scarfoglio may not know that he enjoys the distinction of being the first professional writer to "interview" the Empress; for Monsignor Goddard is, of course, *hors concours*. I venture to assert that Her Majesty has, until now, remained in blissful ignorance of the fact that in the first months of her exile she unconsciously posed to the Chislehurst Mission Priest for a portrait which is throughout of a very striking character.

The object originally aimed at was to record the most noteworthy events in the lives of the august exiles from the dates of their arrival in England—the Empress and the Prince Imperial in September, 1870, and the Emperor in March, 1871.

The scene at Camden Place on the day of the Emperor's unexpected death has been dwelt upon—not, it is hoped, at undue length. For, as M. Jules Claretie, writing in the *Temps* on the last hours of the late King of the Belgians, has well put it: "It is that which is not reported, it is the intimate and poignant detail, the *ensemble* of the *menus faits*, of which Stendhal speaks, which compose the real tragedy." Some may recall, too, Comte Albert de Mun's recent article, in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, descriptive of the funeral of the Comte de Chambord ("Les Derniers Jours du Drapeau Blanc"), in which he narrates the discussions, the rivalries, the pretensions, the terror, the bewilderment, the bitternesses, around a coffin.

The Comte de La Chapelle relates what he saw and heard at Chislehurst on January 9, 1873, and to his

grim story I have added my own "intimate and poignant details" of the sombre picture at Camden Place that winter afternoon. It was "the last day," not of the Monarchical White Flag, but of the Tricolour. And less than seven years later a gun-carriage rumbled over the Common, and the bright folds of the Union Jack drooped caressingly over another coffin, with our Princes as pall-bearers, the while a Queen and her daughter bore a childless Empress tender company at gloomy "Camden." As in 1879 a knot of fellow-workers joined me in recording the valour and the virtues of the "little Prince," so now, thirty years after the tragedy, I have striven to perpetuate and keep for ever green and untarnished his fragrant memory.

From Monsignor Goddard's literary remains, and from a variety of other sources—all, I trust, duly acknowledged—I have woven a comprehensive narrative of the futile "conspiracies" at Chislehurst and in Brussels for the restoration of the Bonaparte dynasty. It is difficult to arrive at the exact truth of these Imperialist plottings. Confirmation of some of the more important passages appears in the entertaining and instructive "Notes from Paris" published in *Truth* on February 10, 1910, *à propos* of the Baron and Baronne de Bourgoing :

"The Baron had an unlooked-for effect as a political agent of the Empress Eugénie and her son [when, of course, at Chislehurst] in bringing the Versailles Assembly to vote the Republic. A former soldier in the Baron's service, whose family had been under an obligation to Gambetta, used to give the latter information as to the Bonapartist agitation in the Nièvre. He came upon a paper, which he or somebody else purloined, giving figures and other details that

more than confirmed all his communications. It was shown confidentially to the principal men on both sides of the Assembly, save, of course, those few who clustered round M. Rouher. They all saw how serious the conspiracy had become, and they agreed to feign belief in the paper having been dropped in a railway carriage by Baron de Bourgoing, and picked up by a fellow-traveller, a Republican. This led to all the Moderates of every section agreeing to draw up a Constitution. M. Wallon, a religious Gallican candidate, framed that instrument, which a Select Committee of the Assembly had thrashed out. It was voted by a majority of a single voice, and we have lived under it thirty-four years."

The above, then, is a valuable item of evidence concerning the restoration plot at Chislehurst. The Baronne de Bourgoing (as the writer reminded us) is the lady who was pre-eminent at the Français in her day, first as Mademoiselle, and then as Madame, Reichenberg.

The facts respecting the intended issue, after her death, of the pretended "Memoirs" of the Empress Eugénie were courteously communicated to me by M. Franceschini Pietri.

The Bonapartist Princes have very courteously aided me by gifts of new portraits. A lady who has been a devoted friend of the Empress Eugénie for many years generously placed at my disposal her valuable collection of rare photographs of the imperial family; and from other ladies who have long enjoyed the intimate friendship of Her Majesty I have received generous encouragement and advice. It was not possible to utilize in this volume a tithe of the valuable portraits of the Empress, the Emperor, and the Prince Imperial presented or lent to me.

E. L.

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EMPERESS EUGÉNIE

CHAPTER I

AT HOME IN ENGLAND

“When, the day after the battle of Sedan, the Prince de la Tour d’Auvergne officially informed the Empress Eugénie that the Emperor was a prisoner, she exclaimed: ‘You lie, sir! He is dead!’

Later, M. de Vougy handed her a telegram, and she read: ‘The army is defeated. I am a prisoner.—NAPOLEON.’”

THE war was raging, the siege of Paris had begun, Napoleon III. was still the King of Prussia’s prisoner at Wilhelmsöhe, when, in the autumn of 1870, the Empress Eugénie and the Prince Imperial took up their abode at Camden Place, Chislehurst.

The mansion received its name from the famous antiquary and historian, William Camden, who, whilst residing at Chislehurst, wrote his “Annals of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth.” After the death of Camden, who was buried in Westminster Abbey in November, 1623, the estate passed into the hands of the Pratt family, one of whom, Sir Charles Pratt, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, was raised to the peerage some century and a half ago as Baron Camden of Camden Place, Kent. Antiquarians of the past found in the little park an object of interest in the shape of a celebrated piece of archi-

ecture known as the "lantern of Demosthenes" or "choragic monument of Lysicrates."

Before "Camden" passed into the hands of Mr. N. Strode, it was uninhabited for many years, probably because a double murder had been committed there. The tenants, an old couple, were the victims of an undetected, though not an unsuspected, criminal. With the aged pair their son and one servant had lived. The latter disappeared immediately after the murder; the son was arrested, but no evidence connecting him with the crime was forthcoming, and, after the inquiry, he continued to reside in the house until his death. By his own wish he was buried in the tomb which contained the remains of his parents, and on the stone he caused to be engraved the mystic words: "Fear not; it is I." The Prince Imperial, strolling through the graveyard, discovered the epitaph, and was then told the story of the crime.

"Perhaps," said the Prince, "that inscription was the murderer's confession. Entering his parents' room, he may have exclaimed, to allay their suspicions and to render his ill-deed the easier of execution: 'Fear not; it is I.'"

The Prince often discussed the tragedy with those friends who visited the Emperor and Empress, and sought their opinion of his theory.

A new version of the Empress's departure from the Tuileries on September 4, 1870, has been recently published. Here, then, it is only necessary to note that Her Majesty, accompanied by Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki, was safely escorted by Mr. Evans to Deauville, and was landed at Ryde by Sir John M. Burgoyne on the 8th. The little party rested at the York Hotel for a few hours, and then crossed in the ordinary

steamboat to Portsmouth. During the day it had been ascertained that the Prince Imperial was at Hastings, and thither the Empress at once proceeded.

On the day of his mother's arrival at Ryde the young Prince had reached Dover, and had immediately been taken to Hastings by Commandants Duperré and Lamney and Comte Clary, who had escorted him from Ostend. The Emperor had parted from his son shortly before the fighting at Sedan, and the poor boy had been taken from place to place until the final stage of his wanderings, Ostend, was reached. The sojourn of the Empress and the Prince at Hastings lasted from September 8 until September 24, when they left for Chislehurst.

As descriptive of *choses vues*, the impressions of a lady who witnessed the arrival of the illustrious exile at Hastings may be cited from the *Westminster Gazette* :

" I was strolling on the East Parade, when I noticed that loungers halted in evident anticipation. 'The Empress Eugénie is coming from the station,' said someone to me. Soon, in an open fly, there appeared two ladies in black, one of these, very pale, but perfectly serene, middle-aged, and handsome still, gracefully acknowledging the salutations of the onlookers. It was the Empress. Joined by her son and his tutor, the little party spent some days at the Albion Hotel. Their wishes for entire privacy were respected ; indeed, very little interest was taken in the imperial refugees. Every morning, in fine weather, mother and son would climb the East Hill (not then, as now, disfigured by a lift), and revel in the sea-blow and the view. On the eve of departure the little Prince called upon the Mayor to thank him for the undisturbed quiet they had enjoyed, and for the respectful aloofness of the population. . . . In

1855 I was at a Peckham boarding-school, and I remember that all the girls were called up to some spot—I forget where—to see the Queen, Prince Albert, the Emperor Napoleon, and the Empress Eugénie pass on their way to the Crystal Palace. Never shall I forget that vision of a loveliness which seemed positively to scintillate. The Spanish are notably a handsome race, and in the person of this golden-haired Andalusian was realized the perfectibility of form, feature, and colouring."

A moving scene was enacted at Dover one March day in the following year, and it was witnessed by a curiously-composed crowd of French and English. The gaze of the assemblage was riveted on a beautiful, stately woman and a slim youth, who were anxiously awaiting the incoming of the Ostend boat. The woman was the Empress of the French, the boy the Prince Imperial, the central figures in a group of relations and friends—Prince Murat, Prince (Jérôme) Napoleon, and Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte (a resident in London) amongst them.

As the steamer came alongside, the excitement of the watchers became more intense, for they had already recognized on the deck Napoleon III., General Fleury, Baron Hekren, and another of the Murats—Prince Achille. A few minutes later the Emperor, all smiles, was clasping his consort in his arms, and "passionately" kissing his son. The boy saluted his father on both cheeks.

To officially welcome the former ruler of France, there came—of all men in the world—the Coroner, Mr. W. H. Pain, who, addressing the Emperor, said :

"As Mayor of Dover, I received your Majesty on

the occasion of your visit to England, as Queen Victoria's guest, fifteen years ago, and I now repeat my salutations."

The Emperor smiled, said a few words of thanks, and then, with the Empress (who could not restrain her tears, and looked somewhat frightened at the extraordinary "demonstration") and the Prince Imperial, slowly moved towards the South-Eastern terminus. The crowd pressed round the imperial trio, and progress was slow; sometimes all three were almost lifted from their feet. However, aided by the police, they at length forced their way to the Lord Warden Hotel amidst vociferous cheering, the waving of hats and pocket-handkerchiefs, and shouts, by French and English alike, of "Vive l'Empereur!" "Vive l'Impératrice!" The Emperor and his son shook hands impartially with friends and strangers, and pressed the tiny palms of children; ladies and men kissed the imperial lady's hand. When the party entered the special train, there were seen with them Comte Davilliers (the equerry who had been by the Emperor's side throughout the campaign, never leaving him, in fact), Drs. Corvisart and Conneau (also his companions), M. Raimbeau, M. Franceschini Pietri, Mme. Conneau and her son, Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki, Major Dickson, M.P., and Lady North (who had accompanied the Empress from Chislehurst to Dover). A warm greeting awaited the exiles at Chislehurst, and to the accompaniment of more cheers and salutations they drove to Camden Place, eighteen waggon-loads of luggage preceding them.

As the Emperor set foot on English soil, he once more tasted the joy of freedom. To a man who had known six years' imprisonment in a French fortress,

detention in a German château—a palace, rather—for less than seven months was comparatively pleasurable. As he had entered it—very corpulent, grey-haired, sallow-complexioned, with bright piercing eyes and turned-up moustache, wearing the full uniform of a general minus a sword—so he had departed from it with all the honours accorded to Sovereigns. The last day of his captivity was March 19. It was a Sunday, and, although the preliminaries of peace had been signed, no order from headquarters for the release of the prisoner was received until the Friday previous. On Saturday Marshal Bazaine and his wife arrived to take leave of Napoleon. Prussian officers assembled early, and the Catholic Dean of Cassel was there to celebrate Mass in the château for the last time. The guard of honour was composed of men of the 83rd Regiment, and when the Emperor appeared at the portico they presented arms and the fifes and drums played. He inspected the guard, and then entered one of the eight royal carriages which had been provided to take him and his attendants to the railway-station. The carriage containing Napoleon was drawn by four superb Trakhene stallions, sent from Berlin by the Emperor William's orders. General Count Monts sat on the left of Napoleon, General Vaubert and Commander Heff opposite. At the station a full band, with six drums, played the great "Zapfenstreich," which had greeted the captive on the day of his arrival, four days after the battle of Sedan; and, said an eyewitness of the last scene of all: "I never saw him so moved before. He walked up and down in front of the soldiers presenting arms, then took off his hat in salutation of the troops, not being able to suppress a tear in his eye.

He shook hands with General Monts ; and then he was gone."

Wilhelmshöhe had a familiar ring in the ears of Napoleon III., and he could recall the time when it was Napoleonshöhe, the residence of his uncle Jérôme, King of Westphalia, brother of Napoleon I., and grandfather of Prince Victor, the present Bonapartist Pretender. King Jérôme was so far from being a pillar of morality that the good folk of Westphalia cried aloud at his doings. The tale of his evil courses naturally penetrated to the Tuileries, arousing Napoleon I. to a show of indignation. "Brother Jérôme Napoleon," said his elder, "you are fond of good cheer and of the ladies : the first intoxicates you ; the second make you talked about." Napoleon III. chanced to be visiting his cousin, Elise Baciocchi, in the Morbihan, when news was brought him that Jérôme was seriously ill—that his end was approaching. The Emperor sent for Cardinal Morlot, begging him to go to the King immediately. "Napoleon I. died a Catholic," said the Emperor, "and I wish my uncle Jérôme to die 'properly.'" The Cardinal started forthwith for Napoleonshöhe, and so the wicked old monarch's last moments were solaced "with all the sacraments of the Church."

The crowd at Dover had cheered the Emperor as if there stood before them some great English captain fresh from victory.

"What are we to think," asked the *Times*, "and what will the Germans think, and what will the French people think, of all this effusive and unqualified admiration ? What, indeed, will Louis Napoleon himself think of it when the quietude of Chislehurst enables him to review the events of the

day ? For the last six months he has been treated as the scapegoat in a great national calamity. The French sympathizers in this country, conscious of the weakness of the French cause, visited all its faults on the ex-Emperor's head. It was he, they said, who had plunged France into war and conducted her to inevitable ruin. They would not even recognize the provocation drawn from the aggrandizement of Prussia, or the satisfaction with which, until its disasters began, the war was held by the most prominent classes of Frenchmen. They laid at his door every piece of misfortune. . . . It is hard to discover in the terrible events of the last eight months any one incident or purpose which entitles Louis Napoleon to the applause of popular acclamation. . . . What becomes of all the lavish sympathy with France 'after Sedan' if the 'Man of Sedan,' after all, is found to be the idol of the hour ? . . . It must appear, we imagine, to Germans, Frenchmen, and all other people who read the story, that Englishmen lend themselves to the work of the moment with most unthinking minds. We, as a nation, have less complaint against him than any other, and it would certainly be hard if a refuge which is never denied to political exiles should be rendered unpleasant to one who has so often proved himself our friend."

When the Emperor landed, it was seen that he was somewhat stouter, and much greyer, than he had been before his captivity—before that September morning when he tendered his sword to the victorious monarch, and telegraphed to the Empress :

"I am the King of Prussia's prisoner. Take the Prince to England."

Camden Place was not unfamiliar to the Emperor. He remembered it as the home of a charming girl, with whom he had been smitten in his earlier days.

Miss Emily Rowles, who at that period in the history of Louis Napoleon resided with her father at "Camden," had looked favourably upon the young Prince—had, in fact, accepted him. All the arrangements for the marriage were made. Miss Rowles had received numerous presents, amongst them being some valuable furs and other things which had belonged to the Empress Josephine and to Louis Napoleon's mother, Queen Hortense. But Miss Rowles no sooner heard of the infatuation of her wooer for one Miss Howard than she broke off her engagement to the Prince, and subsequently married the Marquis Campana, an Italian nobleman. The Marquis was at a later date involved in a financial scandal, in which the Italian State pawnshop, the *Monte di pieta*, figured, and was imprisoned. In her wifely distress, the Marquise appealed to her old flame, and the Marquis was liberated as the result of an urgent request from the Tuileries, where, by this time, the rejected of Emily Rowles was beginning to attract the world's attention as Napoleon III.

The large house facing the common had been taken, furnished, for the imperial exiles by the late Mr. Thomas W. Evans, an American dentist then, and for many years subsequently, practising in Paris. The owner of the property was the late Mr. N. Strode, whose place of business was in Trafalgar Square. It has been told of him (I know not with what accuracy) that he had predicted that "something would happen" to cause the Emperor to take refuge in this country, and that "Camden" would one day become His Imperial Majesty's home.

Until the Emperor's death, the semblance of a

Court was maintained at Camden Place. A number of relatives and friends made it their occasional home. The best known of these partisans of the overthrown dynasty were the Princes Murat, the Duc and Duchesse de Mouchy, Baron Gourgaud, Baron Jérôme David, M. Lavalette, M. Henri Chevreau, the Casabianca family, and M. Clément Duvernois. M. Rouher flitted to and fro, and his word was law until the Emperor's arrival from Germany. But he was always a power at Chislehurst.

Prominent official members of the imperial household were the Duc de Bassano, the Comte and Comtesse Clary, Dr. Baron Corvisart, Dr. and Mme. Conneau, M. Franceschini Pietri (still the secretary of the Empress, as he had aforetime been secretary of the Emperor), the Comte Davilliers (formerly premier écuyer), Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki (sister of General Bourbaki, who had commanded a corps during the war, Mme. de Arcos, and Mlle. de Larminat. Mme. Lebreton, Spanish by birth, was for years a great favourite of the Empress. She had lost her son, a delightful young man, in the war, and had made many sacrifices in order to reside with the Empress in England. The Rev. I. Goddard (afterwards raised to the dignity of a Monsignor), who was in charge of the Catholic Church of St. Mary, was a daily visitor at Camden Place. Later came the Duc de Cambacérés.

A legion of domestics soon came into being ; amongst them were Delafosse, maître d'hôtel ; Uhlmann, the Prince Imperial's valet ; and Alexandre, the chef, with two principal assistants. It was a large establishment, necessitating the employment of a numerous staff of servants. On September 10 there had reached

Harwich twenty-two of the Emperor's horses, two carriages, and a portion of the imperial cortège at Sedan. Sixteen servants accompanied this contingent, of which Comte Dauré had charge.

Shortly after the defeat at Sedan, M. Augustin Filon came to England, and soon became a well-known figure in literary and social circles. He was the young Prince's tutor. M. Lennheim taught the Prince German, and M. Richards mathematics. The Emperor himself instructed his son in history and "the art of government." In October the Prince became an occasional student at King's College in the classes for mathematics and physics, going to and fro daily. Then he passed into the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich with his friend, young Conneau—Louis Napoleon Eugène Jean Joseph Conneau, son of Dr. and Mme. Conneau (the lady with the beautiful voice, who later entered the ranks of professional singers and teachers, and was first heard at the Crystal Palace).

Shortly before the Emperor's arrival at "Camden" the Prince Imperial joined the Chislehurst troop of the West Kent (Queen's Own) Yeomanry Cavalry, commanded by the Earl of Darnley. The Prince, in plain clothes, attended one drill of the troop on Chislehurst Common, and Quartermaster Holland was instructed to prepare his uniform and accoutrements as a "ranker." A Bonaparte serving as a full private in an English yeomanry regiment—this was what to-day would be called a "record." But I fancy that the Prince's connection with the Chislehurst troop was a brief one, only a prelude to the "Academy." Later in the year the Prince welcomed the arrival of a dear old friend—Tambour, his

favourite pony, which Princesse Mathilde had purchased at one of the sales of the imperial effects, amongst them being the horses and carriages which had formerly belonged to the Sovereigns. During the siege the animals had been worked very hard, and had greatly depreciated in actual value, yet they all realized high prices, and the carriages and the mess plate of the old Imperial Guard were eagerly bid for when they, too, came under the hammer.

The Emperor spent most of his time in his study, writing much and reading much, and devoting all his leisure to the instruction of his son. For many years—long before the war—he suffered acutely from an internal malady; this caused him unspeakable agony when in the saddle, and during his scarcely two years' residence at Camden Place he was seen on horseback only three times. One saw him, on a handsome "mount," inspecting the cadets from Woolwich, drawn up in parade order before Camden Place; once he rode slowly to Bickley, but when he had got back to "Camden" he was so exhausted that he had to be almost lifted from the saddle. A good rider, with a perfect "seat," he was an attractive figure on horseback. He liked to stroll on the common, usually leaning on the Empress's arm, and sometimes accompanied by the Prince. The favourite walk was to St. Paul's Cray Common. Everybody seemed to know them, and gave them respectful greeting. Sometimes the Emperor would stop at a certain shop, and have a familiar talk with the parrot, Jacob, the joy of the establishment. Clubmen read, with not a little amusement, that the Emperor had been elected a member of the "Corinthian," in Regent Street! Many people had recognized the Emperor and

Empress as they drove through the crowded West End to Buckingham Palace on the great day of the thanksgiving service at St. Paul's for the recovery of the Prince of Wales.

It was a life of quiet dignity that was lived at the big house. Monotonous it assuredly was not. A man who has ruled a great empire cannot, even if he would, suddenly assume the character of a humdrum country gentleman. The crown had been trampled into the mire, Alsace and Lorraine torn away from France, an indemnity of £200,000,000 levied, and the country "occupied" by the Teutons, who were in partial possession when Napoleon III. landed at Dover. But there were many who, as will be narrated, dreamt of, and worked for, a restoration of the overthrown dynasty, remembering that, if anything happened to the fallen Emperor, there was the boy-Prince growing into manhood. The Emperor could not avoid seeing and conferring with those who "dreamt dreams," as he himself had done aforetime. An army of courtiers and officials, of ambassadors, generals, and admirals, with crowds of the smaller fry, had been, by the chances of war, expelled from their posts and reduced to nothingness. What more natural than that these clamorous "out-o'-works" should besiege Chislehurst? Every week saw them crossing the Channel and demanding admittance to Camden Place. De-throned Cæsar had to receive them, even had to assume a certain cheerfulness, *nolens volens*. It is pleasant to know that there were also many, very many, genuine friends who came on a mission of consolation and affection; and what a warm welcome there was for such!

That Napoleon III. had a rare capacity for making,

and keeping, friends was one of his virtues, tacitly admitted by even his bitterest adversaries, and he had them in abundance to the end. He had his English friends, too, and others who, although not of our own country, resided here. Of the former (to name only two or three) were Lord and Lady Sydney and the Mr. and Mrs. Borthwick of those distant days. Mr. Borthwick (the late Lord Glencesk) was a sage counsellor as well as a cherished friend ; in fact, the editor-proprietor of the *Morning Post* had been *personâ grata* at the Tuileries for some twenty years before the war, and enjoyed the full confidence of the Sovereign.

Napoleon III. was indifferent to what are called the pleasures of the dinner-table. He preferred plain fare when he could get it. His favourite dish was *perdreux aux choux*, but it was seldom placed on the table owing to the obstinacy of Alexandre (the chef at Chislehurst) and his wife. Comte Clary would go to the kitchens and personally tell the cook that His Majesty wished to have partridges (with sweet cabbage) for lunch or dinner. Alexandre called the gods to register his vow that the birds should be served in obedience to the Emperor's command. But the partridges seldom, if ever, appeared, a frequent excuse being that none could be got.

"I thought we were to have *perdreux aux choux* to-day," the Emperor would say, in his mild, drawling tones. And there would be an explosion of wrath from the other side of the table, for Clary was less disposed than his imperial master to put up with the chef's whims and crotchets. It required something more than the absence of partridges from the menu to disturb the equanimity and phlegm of Napoleon III.

There was not a little quiet entertaining at Camden Place in 1871 and 1872, although less than there might have been had it not been more and more recognized that the Emperor's health was visibly declining. His indomitable will seemed to enable him to defy the insidious march of his malady, and many share the opinion of those who knew him best that but for the bitter humiliations consequent on the disasters of 1870 his life might have been prolonged.

He was a most melancholy contrast to the Emperor whom I first saw in Paris one 15th of August, the Festival of the Assumption, the great Bonapartist fête-day. Emperor, Empress, and little Prince were together. Streets and houses were flagged, bells rang, bands pealed, troops of all arms swarmed (to young eyes and vivid imaginations there appeared to be millions), the crowds (those *must* have been "in their millions") cheered, gesticulated, and waved hands, hats, and pocket-handkerchiefs in a delirium of pleasure. I recall the pointed waxed moustache (so grey and limp at Chislehurst), the tuft on the chin, the keen eyes, the calm, melancholy, inscrutable face, and the dignified pose. I had heard much, and read more, of the dash and pluck of his soldiers when they stood shoulder to shoulder with ours in the Crimea; and for this I felt—we felt—that it was due to him to shout with all the force of young lungs: "Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Impératrice! Vive le Prince Impérial!" The Empress was lovely; no need to dwell upon that. She was the most divine creature we had ever seen—with one exception, nearer home. The bonny Prince smiled all over his sunny face—smiled, and saluted most correctly.

I had seen Imperialism in all its splendour and

magnificence. In the long-after I was to see it in its tragic humiliation, through the smoke and fire and blood of the battle-field, and to hear the requiems chanted for the father and the son.

Chislehurst all at once sprang into fame, and when it became known that the imperial family attended church on Sunday mornings, the early trains from Charing Cross and Cannon Street invariably took down varying numbers of curious and interested people, of all classes and all creeds, Catholics perhaps being in the minority. Father Goddard did not at all appreciate this incursion of sight-seers. It required the exercise of not a little diplomacy to gain admittance to the church. The priest was a very outspoken man, and thoroughly sincere in all he said and did. He disliked to see paragraphs about the church in the newspapers, and there was consequently very little love lost between him and the unfortunate reporters. He was one of the best-informed men in England and France on Bonapartist happenings. For some reason or other he did not seem quite to "hit it off" with Archbishop Manning, who had not at that time received the Cardinal's hat. Perhaps Father Goddard did not display quite as much deference to the famous prelate as the latter expected, and exacted, from all his clergy. The appearance, in after-years, of volume upon volume from the pens of French authors of note, rending the veil which had hitherto concealed the skeletons of the last Empire, vexed and annoyed the worthy priest.

The people who flocked to Chislehurst Sunday after Sunday were actuated by natural curiosity to get a glimpse of the dethroned Emperor and Empress and their child-son on their way to church. The

friendly relations which had existed for upwards of a quarter of a century between Queen Victoria and the imperialist couple counted for very little, if indeed for anything, with our public in 1871, and by hundreds of thousands in this country the Emperor was still regarded as an adventurer who had waded through blood to a throne.

But the Empress! Every woman in the land, from the Duchess to the milliner's errand-girl, had "something nice" to say of the imperial lady. It was enough, and more than enough, that she had "set the fashion" as long as most women cared to remember. Even the outrageous crinoline was sanctified in the eyes of the British matron and her daughters from the moment of its adoption by the beautiful arbitress of fashion. There was a time when to wear the hair *à l'Impératrice* was a sign of social distinction. And was there not the "Eugénie lift" (of the dress)? When she came to Chislehurst she was only forty-four, and still lovely. All Englishwomen had a tender word for her and for the Prince, who in a couple of years shot up into a young man, dignified, yet the reverse of stiff, gaining the affectionate friendship of his fellow-students at Woolwich, and, indeed, of all who were brought into contact with him. In build and vivacity he resembled the late King Alfonso of Spain.

Those who visited the Empress at Chislehurst, shortly after her arrival, noticed, to their surprise, that she looked well and cheerful. She talked very hopefully of France, and evidently believed that the majority of the French people still regarded Napoleon III. as their lawful ruler.

"The Empress," said one of the guests—a lady—

“loves France more than she loves power, and anyone who will aid in saving France from Prussia she looks upon as her friend.”

This favoured person noted that on the day of her visit Her Majesty's dress was a brown walking costume. The petticoat was of brown silk, trimmed with three flounces of velvet, over which were a tunic and jacket of brown merino of the finest texture. The tunic was trimmed with flounces of silk of the same shade; the jacket, like the petticoat, trimmed with velvet. It was a “simple little jacket, fitting her lovely shoulders most perfectly; slashed at the sides and back, and trimmed all round with one row of velvet ribbon, an inch and a half wide. At the wrists were deep pointed cuffs, with little gold buttons extending from the bottom of the sleeve to the point of the cuff; and at the neck a small velvet collar. The tunic was very full, and looped up most gracefully. Around the throat she wore a white tie, with a large bow in front. Her gloves were of silk, very long at the wrists—the shade a light buff. Her sun-umbrella was similarly buff-coloured, lined with green silk. Her small black straw hat was bound round the rim with black silk—the rim narrow and drooping; on the left side was a large bow. The veil was of black thread lace.” In her right hand the Empress carried a substantial brown cane, not for ornament, but for use. She wore no jewellery of any kind. The ladies in attendance had black hats similar to that of the Empress, and all wore silk petticoats, with tunics and jackets of some other material. Some of them, imitating their imperial mistress, carried walking-sticks; others used their umbrellas as canes. The men wore dark grey trousers, black coats, and round-

toed boots. The Empress walked about the grounds, escorted by one of the gentlemen, and the other members of the party followed in couples.

I have heard it said that, until the Emperor's death, the imperial family's expenditure at "Camden" was at the rate of £12,000 a year. An intimate friend of the exiles waxed pathetic on their *faibles ressources*, and seemed surprised that the stables contained not more than three or four carriage horses, two serving as the mounts of the Emperor and his son. The same gentleman had observed, too, that the lodge-keeper was a woman. As a matter of fact, the lodge was kept by a man—a perfect Cerberus—and his wife. The imperial finances, so far as they are known, are detailed in a later chapter. When the Empress first inspected Camden Place, she told the owner, who looked more French than English, that she feared it would be beyond their "mediocre resources." They could not, she said, afford to pay more than 12,000 francs a year for a house.

"Well, your Majesty," replied Mr. Strode, a generous-minded man, anxious that the illustrious exiles should be suitably housed, "I am only asking £500 a year" (12,500 francs). And at that rental the furnished mansion passed into the hands of the Sovereigns.

When the amiable landlord married, in 1872, the Empress offered to surrender the lease, but Mr. Strode declined Her Majesty's gracious suggestion. The story, narrated on the authority of Mme. Octave Feuillet, that the Empress had to exercise the strictest economy in the expenses of her table, lamp-oil included(!), need not be taken too seriously. There is reason, however, in the remarks which fell from the

lips of an attached French friend of the imperial trio : “*Malgré* the certainty that the resources of the Emperor’s private domain were notoriously sufficient, and more than sufficient, to pay the debts of the civil list, M. Thiers persisted in retaining under sequestration the *biens privés* of the Empress, even her furniture. Thus we had the strange and deplorable spectacle of the representatives of their Majesties being forced to present themselves at the public auctions which took place at the Louvre, for the purpose of buying porcelain, linen, and everything that was necessary for the residence at Camden Place.”

What a mournful New Year’s gathering was that at Camden Place in 1871 ! The Empress held a levée, her first, and assembled around her between fifty and sixty of the principal French families then residing in England, some of them exiles, like herself and her son. To meet them there were the Duc de Persigny, the Marquis de Lavalette, Baron Jérôme David, M. de Bonville, and M. Rouher. The absent one at Wilhelms-höhe was in the minds of all. The Empress had thrown off the depression which had weighed her down after the failure of her efforts to obtain an honourable peace, and was almost cheerful. The young Hope of France was overwhelmed with congratulations upon his bravery under fire.

CHAPTER II

FIRST MONTHS OF EXILE

FROM the earliest days of her arrival in England, the Empress devoted herself to the greatest task of her life—the effort to arrange terms of peace. It was still September, the month of Sedan. The Germans were marching on Paris, which they girdled on the 19th, eleven days after the Empress had found a refuge at Hastings; Metz and Strasburg were besieged; Gambetta was organizing the army of national defence; many months of warfare were before the combatants.

Hastings was the scene of an episode which, trivial almost farcical, in its origin, speedily assumed dramatic importance, and had a resultless termination.

In the second week of September, on or about the 13th, Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki received a letter, signed "Regnier," of whose existence she had been hitherto unaware. The writer simply announced that he "placed himself at the disposal of the Empress." M. Regnier wrote simultaneously to Count Bernstorff, the Prussian Ambassador to our Court, asking if the King would not prefer to discuss terms of peace with the Imperial Government rather than with the chiefs of the Republic. If the Ambassador approved of the suggestion, the amateur diplomatist expressed his readiness to start forthwith for Wilhelmshöhe, and

requested the Count to furnish him with a passport.

The identity of this audacious intervener became of deep interest to the diplomatic body, and of course to the Empress Eugénie. Regnier, who had studied law and medicine, was, it appeared, the partner of a business man in this country, and desired to shine in politics. Whether he was inspired by pure patriotism, or by a less worthy motive, still remains an enigma, without any prospect of absolute solution.

Mme. Lebreton informed M. Regnier that the Empress had no reply to make to his letter. Regnier, unaffected by this rebuff, wrote again to Mme. Lebreton, suggesting that the Empress should protest against the election of a "Constituante." He followed this up by a third letter, hinting that it would be well to open negotiations with Bismarck direct. To this missive the Empress replied, through Mme. Lebreton, that she regarded the interests of France rather than those of the dynasty, and would not interfere with the measures which were being taken for the defence of the country. Perhaps the French view is right—that Count Bernstorff did not regard Regnier's acts in an unfavourable light; and, strange as it may now seem, it is possible that Regnier was, to a certain extent, justified in boasting that he could obtain, by way of the Imperial Government, better terms than could be got by "the soi-disant Republican Government." Be this as it may, his avowed object was to act as an intermediary between Bismarck and the ex-Regent at Hastings.

In his "Souvenirs of the Emperor William I.," the author (Schneider), who had been His Majesty's secretary, remarks that "Bazaine would not recognize

the improvised Republic. He detested some of the generals who were shut up in Paris, and was ready to employ his army for the re-establishment of the Empire, if he were allowed to get out of Metz." Bazaine, then, was evidently a man for the invaders to get in close touch with. But how? By a sort of miracle Regnier had appeared. Here, then, was a negotiator ready to hand. Beyond doubt, Bismarck was made acquainted with that adventurous gentleman's proposals, and made up his mind to take advantage of the extraordinary opportunity. Seeing, however, that the Empress would have nothing to do with Regnier, despite Count Bismarck's backing, Bismarck consented to see M. Jules Favre.

But let us return to M. Regnier. The 16th of September saw him at Hastings, fuller than ever of his self-imposed mission, which, had it been successful, would almost certainly have preserved the Bonapartist dynasty. Regnier, having failed to secure the Empress's co-operation, had recourse to a little ruse. He addressed himself this time, not to Mme. Lebreton, but to M. Filon, the Prince Imperial's tutor. Filon told him that the Empress would not associate herself with any intrigues. Regnier was not abashed; the person who could discomfit him had yet to be found. He was more insistent than ever. He intended, he said, to go straight to Wilhelms-höhe and see the Emperor personally; the Prussian Ambassador had authorized him to do so. He handed to M. Filon a photograph of Hastings, and asked the Prince Imperial to write upon it a word for his father. The youth ultimately scribbled upon the picture, "*Mon cher papa, je vous envoie ces vues d'Hastings. J'espère qu'elles vous plairont.*"

Regnier read in the *Observer* that Jules Favre was about to have an interview with Bismarck. The Prussian Consul in London visé'd his passport, and on September 20 Regnier was at Ferrières, where he found Favre and the Chancellor. In those days the journey from London to Ferrières bristled with difficulties. Regnier, however, who had been treated as a negligible quantity by the Empress, surmounted all obstacles, apparently, with ease. The despised of Hastings was welcomed at Ferrières by Bismarck! When he called upon the Count, he was admitted without delay. Bismarck, who had learnt all about the would-be intermediary from Count Bernstorff, would not allow him to go to Wilhelms-höhe; he had other work for the man from London. A second time Bismarck and Regnier had a lengthy conversation, and the upshot of it all was that Regnier was despatched to Metz to sound Bazaine! Brimming over with enthusiasm, Regnier boldly declared to Bismarck that he would go, if necessary, to Strasburg as well as to Metz, see the commandants of both, and induce them to capitulate in the name of the Imperial Government! "Act," said Bismarck to the stranger whom he had only known a couple of days, "so that we may have before us someone capable of treating for peace, and you will have rendered your country a great service." The Count handed Regnier a safe-conduct, signed with his own hand, and thus conceived: "I require officers commanding the allied forces to let M. Regnier pass without hindrance, and to facilitate his journey as much as possible." So Regnier started for Metz, elated beyond measure, and promising Bismarck that not only would he see Bazaine, but would bring from

the besieged town a general who would go to England and would come to an understanding with the Empress Eugénie ! The *rusé* intermediary had ascertained, before leaving London, that General Bourbaki (then at Metz) was the brother of Mme. Lebreton, and he meant to turn this knowledge to full account.

It has been asserted that Bismarck, deceived by the course of events after Sedan, dreading the *levée en masse*, fearing the long continuance of hostilities, and perhaps the final intervention of the neutral Powers, had recourse to the basest form of intrigue in order to obtain possession of Metz by seducing its commander-in-chief, and so disposing of one of his principal adversaries. The balance of evidence, however, shows that Marshal Bazaine did not require much tempting, but was only too anxious to capitulate. His bitterest assailants have been his own countrymen. His own countrymen adjudged him a traitor, deserving of death. The Empress had been his warmest admirer and supporter, but even she repudiated him after his flight from St. Marguerite.

While Regnier was speeding to Metz, Bismarck again conferred with Jules Favre, and made great play with the Hastings photograph. "This," he said, showing the picture as if by accident, "was the passport of a personage who yesterday morning entered upon *pourparlers* with me." Bismarck omitted—perhaps forgot—to tell M. Favre that the Empress had censured M. Filon for allowing the Prince Imperial to scribble a few words upon the photograph, and that Her Majesty had warned the Emperor that she had in no way authorized Regnier to introduce himself in her name. Bismarck admitted to Favre that the "personage" in question had requested to see

the Emperor, "who," said the Count suavely, "is not the prisoner, but the guest, of Prussia."

Just about this time (September 23) Herbert Bismarck had informed his father by letter that the Prussians were surprised at the attentions lavished upon Napoleon at Wilhelmshöhe, and the Count had replied: "A Napoleon who is well treated is useful to us, and that is all that matters. Vengeance belongs to God. The French must remain uncertain whether the Emperor will be given up to them. This will increase their dissensions."

Regnier, with Bismarck's recommendation in his pocket, found his way to Prince Frederick Charles, who had him conducted to the French outposts. He was soon in the presence of Bazaine, who listened to the recital of the business upon which he said he was engaged—that of concerting with the Empress (!) to save the Army of Metz and to obtain favourable terms of peace for France. Bazaine confided to the adventurer his willingness to capitulate with the honours of war, excluding the town of Metz, which was to remain French territory. Regnier went back to Prince Frederick Charles and reported Bazaine's proposal. The "Red Prince" (whom we were to know later as the father of the Duchess of Connaught) answered that both the army and the town must capitulate. Regnier was reconducted into Metz, had another interview with Bazaine, and requested the Marshal to send General Bourbaki to England. Bazaine consented that that officer should visit the Empress, who had only just then taken up her residence at Chislehurst. Bazaine issued the following order (which appears in the "Papiers Tachard"):

"September 24, 1870.—Her Majesty the Empress-

Regent having expressed a desire to see Divisional General Bourbaki, commanding the Imperial Guard, that officer is authorized to visit her."

Bazaine seems to have been a simple-minded individual. He took for granted all that Regnier told him, and apparently did not hesitate to believe that the writing on the Hastings photograph was really the Prince Imperial's, although there was no other evidence except the intermediary's bare assertion. Bazaine carried his indiscretion to extraordinary lengths, for he confided to the mysterious Regnier, with whom, as we have seen, the Empress would have nothing to do, the all-important fact (if it was a fact) that the provisions of the besieged force would suffice only until October 18. Thus did the Marshal give away the secret of the defence, well knowing that Regnier would pass it on to Bismarck.

Bourbaki was equally credulous. His sister had accompanied the Empress in her flight from the Tuileries, and at the moment of Regnier's appearance at Metz was with the imperial lady at Hastings. Why had not Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki given Regnier a letter of introduction to her brother? Is it possible that neither Bazaine nor Bourbaki suspected that Regnier was "put up" to visit them by the arch-enemy of France?

Towards the end of September, Bourbaki, aided by Regnier, now a "personage" indeed, was smuggled out of Metz disguised as a Luxemburg doctor, and, provided with every facility, proceeded to England. Regnier simultaneously returned to Ferrières, where he handed to Bismarck a photograph of Bazaine bearing the Marshal's signature, and on behalf of Bazaine requested Bismarck to formulate "moderate" terms

of peace. Bismarck, surprised that Regnier's only authority to treat for a conclusion of hostilities was an autograph photograph, telegraphed to the Marshal asking if Regnier was really empowered to negotiate for the surrender of the Army of Metz. Bazaine replied, through General von Stiehle, that he would capitulate, with the honours of war, provided that Metz itself was allowed to remain French. The Marshal further offered to send General Boyer to Prince Frederick Charles with full explanations. This proposal was so far satisfactory to Bismarck that he gave poor Regnier his congé without more ado.

In due course—about September 28—General Bourbaki reached England. Needless to say that the Empress was astounded when he presented himself at “Camden.” She asked him if the forces at Metz were prisoners, and how he had contrived to escape. Bourbaki was dumbfounded. He told the Empress that he had come to England at her request, and with his chief's permission. Her Majesty replied that she had never asked to see him, and that all she had to say was that neither directly nor indirectly had she had any communication with Marshal Bazaine. Bourbaki, deeply humiliated, and recognizing that he had been duped by Regnier's plausible assurances, described the terrible condition of Lorraine and of France generally, but so distressed was the Empress at his narrative that the interview came to an abrupt end. On the following day she informed Bourbaki that she would not treat with Prussia; were she to do so, it would be interfering with the Government of the National Defence, which could obtain better terms than she could hope to get; for she knew that M. Thiers was at that moment consulting the neutral

Powers. All that she could do was to appeal to the Emperor of Austria, to whom she had written a second time.*

Bourbaki's troubles did not end with his journey to Chislehurst. His honour had been cruelly wounded by Regnier's trickery ; he had become an object of ridicule ; it only remained for him to get back to Metz as quickly as possible and take up his command. With this object in view, he addressed himself to Lord Granville, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Through the good offices of the head of the Foreign Office and Count Bernstorff, the General was authorized to return to Metz. On the Luxemburg frontier he was stopped by the Prussian outposts, acting upon the order of Prince Frederick Charles, who apparently treated with contempt Count Bernstorff's declaration to Lord Granville (October 4, 1870) : " Prince Frederick Charles has received from me an order to permit, and to assist, General Bourbaki to return to his post at Metz to fulfil his duty. Regnier gives one the impression of being a spy, but he seems to have honestly desired to serve the Empress Eugénie in sending Bourbaki to her."

Foiled in his endeavour to return to Metz, Bourbaki on October 8 wrote to Gambetta, reporting what had occurred on the frontier, and how Regnier had made him believe that the Empress wished to consult him personally respecting a treaty, containing conditions honourable to France, proposed to Her Majesty by Bismarck. Bourbaki explained how, at Chislehurst, he had been undeceived by the Empress,

* The letters addressed by the Empress Eugénie to the Emperor of Austria, the Tsar (Alexander II.), and the King of Prussia, are printed with the other imperial correspondence.

who had never expressed a desire to see him—a statement which had “struck him to the heart.” The General assured Gambetta that he was ready to return to his command ; if, however, that was impossible, he put himself forthwith at the disposal of the National Defence. As the Prussians had broken faith with him, Bourbaki was thereupon given, first, the command of the Northern Army, and, next, that of the Eastern Army—with disastrous results which need not be recapitulated.

Bazaine, in the early part of October, recommenced *pourparlers* with Bismarck, and on the 12th General Boyer left Metz for Versailles, accompanied by two Prussian officers. Boyer’s mission was fruitless, and on the 18th he returned to Metz and made his report to Bazaine and the officers composing his council. It was resolved to send Boyer to England for the purpose of explaining the situation to the Empress and obtaining her opinion and advice. The General laid Bazaine’s and his council’s views, and certain propositions emanating from Bismarck, before the Empress, who had visitors at Camden Place in the persons of M. Rouher and the Duc de Persigny. Boyer was empowered to ask the Empress (*inter alia*) if she would write a letter releasing the Army of Metz from its oath of fidelity to the Emperor, and giving it full liberty of action ; but whether that request was ever actually made is doubtful. The proposals submitted by General Boyer were considered for two days. Rouher and De Persigny were by no means averse to them ; but the Empress saw the hand of Bismarck in everything which was placed before her, and would consent to nothing.

The Government of National Defence did not at all

appreciate these secret interviews of Bourbaki and Boyer with the Empress—a fact impressed upon her by Prince Metternich, who could, and did, proffer advice to her with the frankness of an old friend. Her Majesty, who at this period retained much of that impulsiveness which had characterized her from her youth, assured the Austrian diplomatist that she so fully appreciated the patriotic efforts of the Republican Government that she would not dream of attempting to counteract them in any way ; she only desired to do everything in her power to mitigate the situation which would be caused by the fatal capitulation of Metz—an event which Boyer had assured her was only a question of hours. “ You cannot,” said Her Majesty, “doubt my patriotism when you see how I am effacing myself and reserving my rights until the conclusion of peace. I want to save the last army we have, even at the price of all my hopes.”

It had been rather wildly suggested that the Empress should journey to besieged Metz, and take her son with her. This proposal she very wisely declined to accept, knowing that her presence amidst the former imperial army would necessarily have a bad effect. The Empress begged Lord Granville to inform the authorities at Tours that on no account would she abuse the hospitality offered her by England by taking part in what would have the appearance of an intrigue ; and that communication was transmitted by the Foreign Minister to the Government of the Republic through M. de Chaudordy.

After her interviews with General Boyer the Empress took a very bold step. On October 22 she wrote, with her own hand, to Bismarck, requesting an

armistice for a fortnight, with permission to revictual the forces at Metz. "I am prepared," she wrote, "to give Marshal Bazaine plenary powers, and to nominate him Lieutenant - General of the Empire. If you consent, it is all-important that you should send word to the Marshal immediately, and let him procure provisions. I await your answer before sending General Boyer with my instructions."

Bismarck's reply soon reached Chislehurst. He pointed out that an armistice was impossible: "Marshal Bazaine has not adhered to our conditions, and we shall be compelled to effect by force of arms, and probably against the Army of Metz, the performance of the treaty. The King will not treat except upon the conditions which I have made known to General Boyer, none of which have been fulfilled." Bismarck had hoped that the Army of Metz would have officially adhered to the Government of the Empress-Regent, and would have accepted a treaty which included the cession of Alsace and a portion of Lorraine, leaving the conquerors a free hand to impose other conditions.

Upon learning that the Empress had refused to comply with the demands of Prussia, Bismarck telegraphed to Bazaine as follows (October 24):

"I have to point out to you that, since my interview with General Boyer, none of the guarantees which I informed him were indispensable before entering into negotiations with the Imperial Regent have been fulfilled; and that, as the future of the Emperor's cause is in no way assured by the attitude of the nation and the French armies, it is impossible for the King to engage in negotiations the results of which His Majesty would have to get accepted by the French nation. The proposals which reach us from

London are, in view of the actual situation, absolutely unacceptable ; and I have to state, with deep regret, that I no longer see any chance of arriving at a result by political negotiations."

General Boyer, on his return from Chislehurst, had been informed by Bismarck that the Prussian Government had demanded the cession of Metz, and the signing by all Bazaine's principal officers of a document recognizing the Regency and undertaking to re-establish it. Bazaine had not dared to reveal those conditions to his officers, especially after Bismarck had informed him of the decisions of the Empress.

The curtain now rose on the last act of the tragedy of Metz. Bazaine signed the capitulation, and was escorted to Germany. At daybreak on October 29, while torrents of rain fell and the wind blew great guns, he scurried out of Metz incognito, having refused the honours of war for his brave troops and delivered the flags into the hands of an enemy which had not captured a single standard on the battle-field. His words of farewell to France were : " This business [the capitulation] will have at least its good side. It will cause Paris to cease its resistance, and it will restore peace to our unhappy country." Unfortunately, the fall of Metz had no such effect. Paris continued its resistance more determinedly than ever, and peace was not signed until nearly four months later.

And what, it will doubtless be asked, became of Regnier ? Thrown over by Bismarck, he returned to London. He was arraigned, tried for treason (in his absence), and sentenced to death for treasonable conduct. Immediately after the sentence Bismarck wrote to him from Varzin as follows (October 2, 1874) :

“In view of the sentence which a French council of war has just pronounced upon you, you have asked me to repeat what I said to you at our last interview respecting my opinion of your conduct. I do not believe that my testimony can be as useful to you as you hope it will be. People are still overexcited, and the majority of your compatriots, who misrepresent me and unjustly believe me to be the enemy of France, will reproach you for what I may say in your favour. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to repeat to you that your conduct has never appeared to me to be inspired by any other motive than courageous devotion to the interests of the country, which, in your opinion, were identical with the interests of the imperial dynasty. I favoured the execution of your plans in the belief that their realization would accelerate the conclusion of peace by placing the Imperial Government—the only one which we then recognized—in relations with the Army of Metz, which seemed to remain faithful to it. Once these relations had been established and consolidated, we should have found ourselves in presence of a Government sufficiently strong for us to have negotiated and concluded peace in the name of France. I can state upon my honour that you never received or requested any advantage, and that in allowing you to enter Metz I believed I was facilitating your performance of a patriotic act, and one calculated to bring about the conclusion of peace.”

Regnier is said to have died at Ramsgate in 1888.

Ill-success attended the Empress's laudable efforts all along the line. Five days before Bazaine signed the capitulation of Metz Her Majesty had an interview with Count Bernstorff (October 23). The Prussian Ambassador was well aware what she would say, and how profitless any discussion of the terms of peace would be. He knew that the cession of Alsace and

most of Lorraine was a *sine quâ non*, plus a heavy indemnity. The interview, then, was foredoomed to failure. It is to her credit that, at this supreme juncture, the Empress did not preoccupy herself with the question of the restoration of the Empire.

Napoleon III., "Prussia's guest" at Wilhelmshöhe, was kept *au courant* of all that occurred at Ferrières, at Versailles, at Chislehurst, and in London. He gave advice from time to time, and several French politicians did likewise, not always concurring in the Emperor's views. M. Clément Duvernois and some others considered that the Empress exaggerated the dishonour which would result from any cession of territory, and agreed with Count Bernstorff that she would have done well to have resigned herself to the inevitable. But she was deaf to all such counsels. "No," she said, "I should prefer to pass the rest of my life with my son in exile. I would, however, consent to renounce all the rights of the imperial family, and to its banishment from France for an indefinite period, if I could bring matters to a happy issue."

To the faithful, but not necessarily judicious, few who surrounded her at "Camden," and who sometimes gave her absurd advice, the Empress said: "The question of the future form of government in France must be relegated to the background. The essential point is the independence of the country. I will take no step which might be considered likely to result in dividing or weakening the forces of France in front of the enemy."

She wrote a pitiful letter to that enemy—to the monarch who had been her guest at the Tuileries three years before :

"I appeal to the King's heart, to the soldier's generosity. I beseech your Majesty to regard my request favourably. Its success is the one indispensable condition for securing a continuance of the negotiations.

"EUGÉNIE."

King William replied from Versailles on October 26. After referring, "not without regret," to the past, and remarking that Prussia had not desired war, His Majesty continued :

"When, at Ferrières, negotiations appeared to be proceeding in your Majesty's name, they were cordially received, and all facilities were given to Marshal Bazaine in order to put him in communication with your Majesty ; and when the General [Boyer] came here it was possible to arrive at an arrangement if the conditions precedent had been fulfilled without delay. But time has run on without the indispensable guarantees for entering upon negotiations being given.

I love my country as you love yours, and consequently I understand the bitternesses which fill your Majesty's heart, and my compassion for them is very sincere. But, after having made immense sacrifices for the defence of Germany, it is certain that the next war will find us better prepared to repel that aggression upon which we reckon immediately France has strengthened her forces or secured allies. It is this melancholy consideration only, and not the desire to increase the extent of my country, which is quite large enough, that compels me to insist upon the cessions of territory, which have no other object than that of setting-back the *point de départ* of the French armies which will come to attack us in the future.

I cannot judge whether your Majesty was authorized to accept, in the name of France, the conditions which Germany demands ; but I believe

that by accepting them your Majesty would have spared your country many ills, and would have preserved it from the anarchy which to-day threatens a nation whose prosperity the Emperor had developed for twenty years."

This letter came as a great shock to the Empress, who may well have thought that she could never endure more intense suffering. She had yet, however, to realize the deepest depth of human affliction.

That bellicose Bonapartist journalist, M. Paul de Cassagnac, whom I remember as a prominent figure at the Emperor's funeral, narrated this interesting incident :

"On the day of my first visit to Chislehurst, I was talking to the Empress and the Prince Imperial, when the strains of military music were heard outside. The soldiers of the garrison of Woolwich had extended their military promenade as far as the imperial residence. The Empress put on her bonnet rapidly, and said to me, 'Come along, and I will show you a little of the English uniform.' We followed her into the park, where a small force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, had halted. A crowd of people soon gathered. The Empress was received with marks of respect. The men took off their hats, the women bowed, and the children ranged themselves in rows. In the midst of this general homage it was really comic to recognize by their impressed mien the two or three French spies that the police of the Republic latterly kept on duty round Camden Place. Then the march-past began, and the officers saluted the Empress ; while the Prince, in his cadet uniform, and mounted on a superb horse, passed rapidly on the flank of the troops, accompanied by his young school comrades. Never in France, in the greatest period of the imperial splendour, was a review held in the Carrousel with more honour than this review in the

land of exile. This reception given by England to the imperial family is the most remarkable incident of grand and touching hospitality that history affords. I should have thought it exaggerated had I not seen it myself. I have often asked myself the real meaning of it, and I can explain it in only one reasonable way. The English are a people eminently practical, whose common-sense is proverbial, and who, in the life of a nation as in the life of a man, view things from a serious point only. With them the imperial family represents France, great and powerful during twenty years—the France which, while she was their ally, gave them the half of their natural supremacy in the affairs of Europe. And when the imperial family passes in the midst of them, they salute it as the France they regret, and such as they hope to see again.”

CHAPTER III

THE EMPEROR'S LAST DAYS AT CHISLEHURST

NAPOLEON III. had been in England less than a week when the Prince of Wales visited him, and conveyed the pleasing intimation that the Queen, then at Windsor, would be glad to see the Emperor. Three days later Napoleon (escorted from Chislehurst by Colonel Du Plat, Her Majesty's Equerry-in-Waiting, accompanied by Prince Joachim Murat, and attended by a small suite) visited the Queen. The date was March 28, 1871.

Thousands of people lined the streets at Windsor ; at the station all the influential inhabitants awaited the coming of the monarch whose name had been on all lips since the day of Sedan. The Emperor was received by his neighbour, Lord Sydney (then Lord Chamberlain) ; Mme. la Maréchale Canrobert, with whom were her two children, Marcel and Clare, remained in the waiting-room. M. Marcel was in Highland costume, and, with becoming pride, carried a large bouquet. The Emperor alighted from the train amidst great cheering and cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" This hearty greeting evidently gratified him, for "he smiled pleasantly and bowed." A resident at Windsor (Mrs. Macdonald) advanced, with on either side the Canroberts ; and M. Marcel, with much dignity and a low bow, presented the flowers to his

gallant father's chief. This bouquet was a rather amusing novelty to the Emperor, who gracefully thanked the donor "for his kindness." The Queen's private suite of waiting-rooms were placed at the disposal of the Emperor, who, to use the familiar *cliché*, "received an ovation all along the line of route." The august visitor remained with the Queen for a full half-hour, and was "seen off" by Lord Sydney and the Earl of Mountcharles. There were great scenes at his departure. Colonel Du Plat accompanied Napoleon back to Camden Place. The Court Circular stated that the Emperor was received by the Queen and the Royal Family, attended by the ladies and gentlemen in waiting, at the entrance-hall, and that Prince and Princess Christian had come from Frogmore "to pay their respects to His Majesty at the Castle."

Queen Victoria's first visit to the Emperor (she had been to Chislehurst four months previously, accompanied by Princess Beatrice, to condole with the Empress) was paid on April 3. Prince Leopold was with his mother, to whom the Emperor fully explained how the disaster at Sedan had been brought about.*

Early in the year the Empress, and later the Emperor, invited that well-known officer who is now General Sir Henry Brackenbury to visit Camden Place. "The Empress talked to me," says Sir Henry,† "of the time when the news of the tragedy of Sedan had arrived, of Trochu and of the promises he had made, and of the Paris mob. 'I am only a woman,' she said, 'and I had the fate of Marie Antoinette in

* *Vide* the Emperor's own detailed narrative of the disaster.

† *Blackwood's Magazine*, February, 1909.

mind.' She was much moved, and I not less so. Of the Emperor, who was still a prisoner of war at Wilhelmshöhe, she said: 'History will yet give him the credit of having maintained order in France for twenty years.' "

When he next visited Chislehurst, General Brackenbury, upon being ushered into the Emperor's room, found His Majesty playing patience. "The Emperor commenced by speaking of Sedan, and we discussed the strategy of MacMahon's march in as quiet a manner as though it had only been a *Kriegsspiel*, and not a move in which his own destinies had hung. When my interview was over, as I bowed myself out of the door, I saw him take up the cards again."

The exiled Emperor "reviewing" the Woolwich cadets on Chislehurst Common was an event witnessed by a comparatively small number of spectators later in the year.

The Emperor had not been in England more than about a month when it was reported that he was suffering so severely from rheumatism that he could not answer the numerous letters of sympathy which every post took to Camden Place. Very soon, however, the pains disappeared, and His Majesty was well enough to drive over to Woolwich Arsenal, accompanied by his son, and together they examined the various works, the Moncrieff gun-carriage, and other inventions.

In July the Emperor and Empress visited Prince and Princess Christian at Frogmore, and once more they met the Queen, who drove over from the Castle to greet them. Like her sister, Princess Henry of Battenberg, Princess Christian has remained one of the most attached and valued friends of the Empress.

A week before the Frogmore meeting the Queen

had reviewed the troops at Bushey Park. Amongst the tens of thousands of spectators, the presence of the Prince Imperial—well mounted—might have passed unnoticed. Her Majesty, however, learnt that he was somewhere in the crowd, and sent a message to the effect that she would like to see him. The Prince soon made his appearance, all smiles and animation as usual, and remained chatting to the Sovereign and Princess Beatrice for some time. Drawing-room and club gossips forthwith began the agreeable task of making mountains out of this Bushey Park molehill, and very soon at every “five o’clock” and every dinner-table the engagement of the Bonapartist Prince and the Queen’s youngest daughter was spoken of as an accomplished fact, much to the annoyance of Her Majesty, whose “views” for the Princess were in complete disaccord with popular rumour.

The great fête-day of the Bonapartists, August 15, which, until the war-year, had always been observed in France with much magnificent display, was celebrated for the first time at Chislehurst in 1871. By an amiable fiction it was spoken of as the “birthday” of Napoleon III., who was, however, as we know, born on April 20, 1808. (His centenary passed unnoticed.) This Festival of the Assumption was an event in the lives of the exiles. Camden Place was full of relatives, friends, and persons who had been attached to the Imperial Court in various capacities. At eleven o’clock High Mass was celebrated at St. Mary’s Church, in the presence of the Emperor, the Empress, the Prince Imperial, and many distinguished people, with whose names, at least, all were more or less familiar. There was an avalanche of letters and

flowers from France. A huge bouquet, accompanied by a handsome album and an address containing hundreds of signatures, came from Paris merchants, traders, and workmen. The officers of what had been the Garde Impériale sent a large bouquet. A number of English people, some (good-natured creatures!) quite unknown to the Imperial Family, made their way to "Camden" laden with flowers for the exiles, who were surprised and gratified at these unexpected attentions.

At the end of August, 1871, the *Great Eastern*—at that time the biggest example of British shipbuilding which had been produced in our yards—was visited by the Emperor, the Empress, the Prince Imperial, and Prince Charles Bonaparte, as well as by many distinguished foreigners, chiefly French. Mr. Scott-Russell, the designer of the leviathan, explained in detail the peculiarities of the vessel. The name of the steamer which conveyed the imperial party to and from the monster ship amused the thousands of spectators; it was *The Lady of Lyons*, so christened, it may be safely assumed, after the title of the play which has probably evoked as many tears as "Hamlet," despite the contempt with which Bulwer Lytton's sentimental work has been, and is, regarded by the superior critic. The visit to the *Great Eastern* was a triumph for the exiles, whose greeting was even more enthusiastic than that which had characterized the Dover demonstration some five months previously. The Prince Imperial was the "pet" of the occasion, the darling of the ladies, the admiration of the girls, and the greatly-envied of the boys. "He made friends with all around him, like any English schoolboy."

Just a month before, Emperor, Empress, and Prince—the boy had already become a popular idol—had made a friendly call on the then most popular of all Englishwomen, who had known Napoleon when he came amongst us as a refugee for the first time. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts received her guests at Holly Lodge. The imperial party took a long drive in and around Highgate, stopping for awhile at the cricket-field of Cholmondeley School, where the Archbishop of Canterbury received them. Then the inevitable happened, for Dr. Dyne could not refuse the Emperor's smiling request for a half-holiday. The Cholmondeley boys had many "good looks" at the imperial youth, who had not only been in a battle, but (so the story ran) had picked up a spent bullet, cut his initials on it with his sword, and given it to one of his friends on the spot.* "Plucky chap!" was the admiring comment. The schoolboys' frantic hurrahs were taken up by "all Highgate" as the imperial carriage drove off.

September 11, 1871, is one of many dates to be remembered, for on that day the Empress left Southampton in the *Oneida* for Lisbon, on her way to Madrid, to visit her mother, who died at the age of about eighty-five eight years later, some six months after the tragedy on the Blood River. On the same day the Emperor, taking his son with him, and travelling as the Comte de Pierrefonds, started for a week's relaxation at Torquay. Sir Lawrence Palk, M.P., afterwards created Lord Haldon, received the august visitor at the railway-station, and the Emperor planted

* In the engagement at Saarbrücken (August 2, 1870) the Prince rode "Kaled," an Arab, brought by the Emperor from Algeria five years previously.

in Sir Lawrence's garden a young shoot of weeping willow, brought from Longwood and presented to the Prince Imperial by an English officer. Prince Joachim Murat, Comte Clary, Comte Davilliers, Dr. Baron Corvisart, and one or two other gentlemen were of the party. At many stages of the journey to and from Torquay the Emperor was very cordially received; and at Bath 2,000 people gathered at the railway-station and cheered Napoleon III. and the young Prince, who by this time was becoming a much-discussed personage, partly, doubtless, owing to the "baptism of fire" incident. While he was at Torquay the Emperor "picked up" wonderfully. He was out every morning at eight o'clock, and strolled about with Prince Murat until eleven, when he was capable of doing full justice to lunch. At seven o'clock a plain English dinner was served, and, as the culinary tyrant Alexandre remained at Chislehurst, the Emperor revelled in partridges with sweet cabbage. The Prince Imperial, Comte Clary, and young Conneau explored the neighbourhood on foot. The Emperor was neither mobbed nor unduly stared at "How well and happy the Emperor looks! The Prince is a dear!" Torquay was delighted with both. It was while the Emperor was sunning himself at Torquay that he was credited with the intention of quitting England and making Canada his permanent home. No such idea ever entered his head.

August, 1872, found the Emperor at the little Sussex resort Bognor, where he passed a pleasant week. There was the greatest curiosity to see him, but no disagreeable "mobbing." From quiet Bognor His Majesty went to Brighton, at the invitation of the Mayor. His reception was enthusiastic; a crowd

gathered in front of the hotel, and cheered until the Emperor appeared at the window. The British Association was holding its annual meeting, and for the first time in its history it welcomed a Napoleon. Henry M. Stanley, whom the *New York Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* had sent to Africa in quest of Dr. Livingstone, read a paper on his travels across the Dark Continent, and received the Emperor's hearty congratulations. The Empress and the Prince Imperial, fresh from their Scottish tour, joined His Majesty at Brighton; and on the 17th the Emperor and his son visited the Aquarium, which was just then the leading attraction. Messrs. George Soames and M. Stevens, as chairman and vice-chairman, received the imperial pair, and to the popular naturalist, Mr. Henry Lee, was allotted the welcome duty of describing the contents of the tanks. We have the assurance of the newspapers that Napoleon III. and the young hero of Saarbrücken listened to Mr. Lee's informal lecture with the greatest interest.

A few days later (August 21) the Emperor, the Empress, and the Prince crossed to Ryde. The Empress called on the Marquis of Exeter at Brookfield; the Emperor and his son amused themselves by a stroll through the streets, cheered at every step by people who had come from all parts of the island. They re-embarked amidst a lively demonstration of sympathy and good-will.

The Emperor did not accompany his consort and the Prince when, on August 23, they paid a visit to the fleet at Portsmouth, making the tour of the squadron in the Duke of Cambridge's yacht *Black Eagle*, under the guidance of Flag-Captain Carr-Glyn, and subsequently being conducted through the arsenal

by Admiral Sir Leopold McClintock, one of the officers who are dear to British memories for their share in the Polar expeditions for the attempted rescue of Sir John Franklin. Among others who were presented to Her Majesty by Sir J. Rodney was Admiral Sir Charles Talbot, who had taken part in the Crimean War. Next the Empress and her son went on board the *Minotaur*, Admiral Hornby receiving them and explaining the construction and the features of the vessel.

From the day of his arrival in England the Emperor began to pay afresh the penalty for his acts and deeds in the previous year.

The Council of Inquiry, presided over by Marshal Baraguay d'Hilliers, had investigated the circumstances attending the successive capitulations of French fortresses and battalions in 1870, and gave its decision in May, 1872. The Council declared, *inter alia*, that the responsibility for the capitulation of Sedan rested upon the Emperor, "a culprit beyond reach of the national vengeance," being then at Chislehurst. Against this weighty accusation, which was considered by many English military experts to be not altogether warranted by the facts, the Emperor defended himself in a spirited letter, written at Camden Place, containing this passage: "We obeyed a cruel, but inexorable, necessity. My heart was broken, but my conscience was tranquil!"

The blow dealt Napoleon III. by the Council of Inquiry was not the only one. The National Assembly at Bordeaux, in 1871, had passed a resolution, proposed by M. Target, who died only in 1908, confirming the expulsion of the Emperor and his dynasty, and de-

claring them responsible for "the ruin, invasion, and dismemberment of France." They were bitter words, but a scapegoat was necessary. M. Thiers added to the misery of the Sovereign in exile. Addressing one of two Corsican deputies, Conti and Gavini (the former had been the Emperor's *chef de cabinet*), Thiers asked: "Do you know, sir, what those Princes whom you represent say? They say they are not the authors of this war. Well, give them the lie in the most formal manner!"

The Emperor had issued from Wilhelmshöhe a protest against the resolution adopted by the National Assembly, with only six dissentients. Napoleon wrote: "I would fain have kept silence, but the declaration of the Assembly forces me to protest in the name of truth outraged and the nation's rights abused."

Just before the latter event—on March 1—the Germans had entered Paris, the Emperor William remaining on the race-course at Longchamp.

Conversing with one of the frequenters of the Bonapartist *salon* at the Hôtel de Flandre, Brussels (to be presently referred to), M. Thiers said: "Emperors and Kings appear to me to have had their day in France. Look here, my friend, you think as I do. Were you not one of the chiefs of that conspiracy which sought to restore the Empire? What has become of that conspiracy? Where are all your fine schemes now? You could not agree amongst yourselves. Changarnier would not listen to you. [In this, as will be seen, Thiers was mistaken.] He is a brave soldier, but really an old woman. The Orleanists might have had a chance of reigning, but their stupidities have made them unpop-

ular. I tell you that the Republic will long govern France. The Bonapartes are finished—absolutely finished. But should the French people ever recall a dynasty, it will be theirs. We shall not see it, but perhaps our grandchildren may. The Napoleons are democrats, and their name will never be forgotten. But to-day the people want the Republic, and it will be best for them.” Thiers was a true prophet.

Many years previously the Duc de Persigny, writing to Lord Malmesbury, had said: “France is a great democracy, which needs discipline, and no element is so fitted to represent it as the Napoleonic.”

The Bonapartists had no more embittered critic than the Duc d’Audriffet-Pasquier. Whilst the exile-in-chief, his days already numbered, was occupied at Chislehurst with the restoration project, the Duc presented to the Chamber the damning report of the Committee of Contracts for arms and ammunition concluded by the military administration from July 18, 1870, onwards. He drew a startling picture of the unreadiness and disorder of the Imperial War Department, and denounced the dishonesty and shameless greed of the persons who had undertaken contracts at the outbreak of the war. These disclosures excited great indignation in the Assembly against the Government of Napoleon III. The implacable Duc became the hero of the hour, and the speech which he delivered in presenting the report was ordered to be printed and circulated throughout what was now a fervently Republican France.

Rouher’s defence was of the lamest, the most unconvincing, and the reply of the Duc was the more effective. Referring to Rouher’s feeble excuses, the Duc said indignantly: “I tell you that, no matter

what the sang-froid of all you light-hearted gentry—no matter how pleasing the shades of Chislehurst—there was an hour when you must have heard a voice crying, ‘Vare, redde legiones!’—‘Give us back our legions!—give us the glory of our fathers; give us back our Provinces!’” Having spoken of the abuses which prevailed under the Empire, the Duc ended his mordant speech with the words, “May God protect France from ever again falling into hands by which she has been so ill-governed!”

Gambetta once more fell foul of the man who carried matters with such a high hand at Chislehurst a little later. “Justice has commenced!” he thundered. “It has seized in turn Morny, Jecker, Maximilian, and Napoleon III. It clutches Bazaine. It awaits you!”

In such hands Rouher was the merest shuttlecock. Yet the Empress put her trust in him until the end, leaning complacently on that broken reed. He had been for years devoted to the Emperor, even, so his critics affirmed, to the point of sycophancy, and they jocosely said of him that whenever Napoleon III. had an attack of biliousness, a cold, or a cough, Rouher was always found to be suffering similarly.

In order to explain the attempts which were made to restore the fallen dynasty, reference must be made to events which preceded the landing of Napoleon III. at Dover on March 20, and had their sequel in England.

Until the Emperor’s arrival at Chislehurst, the principal scenes of the restoration drama—or, as Thiers, Gambetta, and the other heads of the Republican party deemed it, the Bonapartist comedy—were

enacted at Brussels, whither all who had the means fled long before Paris was besieged. Between September, 1870, and March, 1871, then, the Belgian capital was the main centre of the propaganda, those concerned taking the time now from Chislehurst and now from Wilhelmshöhe. The Hôtel de Flandre was the headquarters of the conspirators, who assembled daily for business purposes in a large *salon*. Mme. de MacMahon (wife of the Marshal), her mother, and her sister, the Duchesse de Castries; the witty Comtesse de Beaumont, Mme. Canrobert (the other Marshal's spouse), the Duc d'Albuféra, General Fleury (who had been chafing at the Embassy at St. Petersburg while other commanders were defending the sacred soil), General de Montebello—these were some of the Bonapartist party to be seen daily and nightly in the council-room of the Flandre. That M. Teschard, who had been sent to Brussels by the Government of National Defence as its diplomatic representative, should have been found amongst the plotters seems a little surprising. M. Teschard's wife was German, and when the time came for the Alsatians and Lorrainers to declare whether they desired to remain French or to live thenceforward under the rule of the conquerors, the Teschards "opted" for Germany. M. Teschard's Bonapartist proclivities, as displayed by him at the Hôtel de Flandre, did not at all please Gambetta, who asked him for an explanation of his presence "amongst those 'charmiers.'" Coming from Gambetta, the phrase had a decided piquancy, as those who perused the famous "love-letters" which were given to the world in 1907 must admit.

The centre of the group was, however, General Changarnier, who, despite the fact that he was one of

the notables who were arrested and thrown into prison at the time of the *coup d'état*—a fate he shared with Thiers—had magnanimously rallied to the imperial cause in its last extremity. The value which Napoleon III. attached to Changarnier's co-operation at this juncture is seen by the Emperor's letters.

An *à propos* story has been told of Gambetta. After he had become Foreign Minister, one of the fair "charmers" of the Hôtel de Flandre had a conversation with him, and, the talk turning upon the events of 1870, the Tribune suddenly opened a drawer. "You see this drawer," said he. "It contains letters and despatches of all kinds relating to politics. Well, the oftener I read and reread them, the more I am convinced that many of the actions for which the Emperor has been reproached were justifiable. Ah! when one is only in opposition, when one knows nothing of the enormous difficulties of a Government, when, in fact, one is altogether ignorant of the *dessous des cartes*, everything then seems easy to criticize. But I do not hesitate to tell you that it is wrong for a man to systematically blame his adversary. None but those who have not had 'a finger in the pie' can do it; I have been one of those, and I regret it." Gambetta could do "the handsome thing" on occasion.

The Emperor's depression during the first month of his captivity had led him to think of anything rather than of the possibility of reconquering the throne which he had lost. There is proof of this in a letter which he wrote to a friend on September 28: "I believe there is nothing to be done under existing circumstances except to correct the misstatements of the newspapers, and work as much as possible upon public opinion." He nipped in the bud the first idea

of a restoration. A large number of his friends shared his opinion. To the *intransigents* who found Camden Place an agreeable resort for a week or two, the absent Emperor's opinions were of little consequence ; he was a negligible quantity for the time. Men like M. Magne, whose financial skill was so warmly admired by the Empress, agreed with the Emperor that to talk about re-establishing the Empire was futile. "Look at the state of public opinion," wrote Magne from near Vevey on October 12, 1870. "Besides, public attention is almost exclusively occupied with the question of the national defence. It argues the possession of much temerity on the part of those who make conjectures and predictions, or who, as I have said in this letter, formulate projects either for the near or the distant future."

And on November 18, by which time the well-cared-for prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe had shaken off the torpor into which he had fallen, M. Magne wrote: "I do not understand the reports which are in circulation respecting the pretended reactionary plots. In my opinion, it is madness to talk about such a thing [as "restoration"]. No one can know what the future will bring forth. But at the moment there is no choice between a moderate Republic and a Republic *à la Robespierre*." Magne, one of the Emperor's wisest and ablest counsellors, added, in the bitterness of his soul: "Have you read the documents found at the Tuileries—those showing how Rouher and Lavalette caused the Emperor to give me my *congé* as a member of the Privy Council? You know that I had had a presentiment of this, founded upon my knowledge of their feelings and of the Empress's."

Magne's opinions were doubtless shared by the

more serious Bonapartists ; it was, however, in that same month of November that a certain—I will even say a considerable—section of the party resolved to make an effort to re-seat Napoleon III. on the throne, and that the Emperor and Empress directed the movement which they fondly hoped would be successful. One of their principal objects was to secure the co-operation of General Changarnier. Both the Emperor and the Empress brought their influence to bear upon him.

Changarnier was at heart a Legitimist, holding the opinion—sufficiently amusing after the lapse of nearly forty years—that only the Comte de Chambord could restore quiet and prosperity to France ; he had even persuaded himself that “the King” would accept the tricolour ; this belief, as we know, proved illusory, for at the critical moment De Chambord declared that it must be the “white” flag or none.

For a long time Changarnier sat on the fence. The “charmings” at the Hôtel de Flandre lavished their blandishments upon him, but failed to extract either a yea or a nay. The fair creatures were in despair. Never before had the voices of these sirens pleaded vainly to the most adamant heart. Their little hour of transient happiness was, however, at hand. A redoubtable ally came on the scene—Fleury, name of happy augury : the debonair, jovial General Fleury. He had been anything but *au mieux* with the Empress, who had got rid of him by causing him to accept the Embassy at St. Petersburg, and to retain it while this *beau sabreur*, this terrible fire-eater, was pining to “get at” the Prussians. Fleury, then, one fine day, at the prayer of the Emperor, appeared in the dovecote of the Flandre. Before he had got

through a cigar he had Changarnier "in his pocket." Where Venus—a dozen Venuses—had failed, Mars was victorious. Tennyson told Hawker of Morwenstow that his chief reliance for bodily force was on wine. "I should conceive," said the worthy parson, "that he yielded to the conqueror of Ariadne ever and anon." Fleury's bitterest enemies—and they were to be found, if anywhere, amongst the sycophants of "the Empress's party"—could say nothing worse of this devoted friend of Napoleon III. and "the little Prince" than that he saw much virtue in a goblet of "fizz."

But although Changarnier was induced by the persuasive, imaginative Fleury to cast in his lot with Napoleon III., his native modesty did not desert him. He knew his value. The Emperor, through Fleury, had as good as told him that, if a successful restoration was to be engineered, his assistance was indispensable. No Changarnier, no Empire. "If I am to join you," he said, "I must have a *quid pro quo*." Fleury agreed that he would deserve to be well recompensed. What did he propose? "I propose that we shall place the Prince Imperial on the throne, with myself as Regent. Napoleon III. and the Empress to stand aside. I await formal overtures."

Those overtures did not come, and the *rusé*, vacillating Changarnier returned to his old Royalist love. It was not long, however, ere he was again approached on behalf of the Emperor, who, in a letter to a friend, dated Wilhelmshöhe, December 23, emphasized the necessity of "keeping in" with the General, who was to be told that, "at the right moment," the Emperor "would have recourse to his advice."

That Changarnier was for a brief space, the central

figure in this *conspiration de palais* there is little, if any, doubt. If with his assistance the plot succeeded, he was to be made a Marshal. But he still asserted his claim to hold the Regency until the Prince Imperial came of age; that was the price of his patriotism, demanded while he was urging Thiers to support the Comte de Chambord!

The New Year (1871) dawned gloomily for the Bonapartists—for their titular chief at Wilhelmshöhe and for the imperial lady and her son at Chislehurst. Very soon signs of disintegration were visible in the ranks of the imperialist plotters. Some were in favour of the Prince Imperial and a Changarnier Regency; others plumped for Napoleon III. Then came the final break-up of the sections, and the council-room at the Flandre was deserted by the “charmers,” who had plotted, and intrigued, and beguiled in vain.

A document of an extraordinary character, purporting to be issued by the “Central Committee of Appeal to the People,” was distributed amongst the electors of the Nièvre during M. Bourgoing’s candidature for that department. M. Rouher repudiated the document, and declared that he had no knowledge of the existence of any Bonapartist “committees,” but his disclaimer did not produce much effect. It was said that eighty newspapers, with an aggregate circulation of 500,000 copies weekly, were spreading the restoration propaganda in the provinces, and that a special police force had been organized. To this widespread reactionary movement the appropriate title of “Demagogic Cæsarism” was given.

One journal was said to have been established with the avowed sardonic object of “rallying Socialism to

the cause of the Empire, and allying the imperial restoration with the *débris* of the Commune." It was asserted that some of the Communist prisoners had been "got at," and were promised an amnesty in the event of an imperial restoration. Some of these gaol-birds were reported to have written letters, intended for circulation amongst the working population of Paris, containing their "unreserved adhesion" to the projects of the Bonapartist committees. Further, it was affirmed that Bonapartist agents had gone about assuring their credulous hearers that the Marshal-President had accepted the mission of preparing the restoration of the imperial dynasty. Attempts—so it was said—were made to subvert the loyalty of the army and gendarmerie.

Hitherto the Parisians had turned a deaf ear to the stories of the Bonapartist intrigues at Brussels and Chislehurst. The fierce fighting in the winter, the peace negotiations, the three days' "occupation" of the capital, the war loan, and then the Commune, had engrossed them. The months passed, and in September they, too, experienced a sharp attack of restoration fever. The papers were full of it; it was a fresh topic, and boulevard and faubourg were pining for something new to chat about. "Bonapartist intrigues," "Plot for the restoration of Napoleon III.," "The Emperor to make a descent from Torquay," "Regiments bought wholesale by the Emperor"—this was stimulating fare. Amidst all these *cancans* one established fact stood boldly out: Bonapartist pamphlets—seditious publications—had been distributed amongst the troops, the treasonable tracts being hidden between two portraits of M. Thiers!

The elections for the Conseils-Généraux had been disastrous for the Bonapartist candidates ; but one read, “in spite of this the Bonapartist movement is attracting more and more attention every day, and even the most serious journals agree in urging the Government not to despise the danger which the attempts of Strasburg and Boulogne and the *coup d'état* of 1851 have proved to be anything but chimerical.” It was curious to find Bonapartist journals siding with the Radical press in advocating a general amnesty on behalf of the Communist prisoners, a plebiscitum, and universal suffrage. A fortnight had sufficed to produce this change of public opinion, as represented by the chameleon press.

The restoration excitement lasted just about a month. In those four weeks appeared a new Bonapartist paper, called—one would think in pleasant irony—*L'Ordre*, edited by that pungent and pugnacious writer, M. Clément Duvernois, who had been for long a prime favourite of the exiles. Until the appearance of the new journal, the principal Bonapartist organs had been the *Pays* (Paul de Cassagnac's fire-and-brimstone sheet) and *L'Avenir Libéral* ; and the three of them worried the Government until the suspension of the *Pays* and *L'Ordre* was decreed. An incident in October provoked not a little amusement at Chislehurst. Prince Napoleon had gone to Corsica to solicit a seat in the General Council—an act which so irritated M. Thiers and his sensitive colleagues that they despatched a squadron of ironclads, which, to the amazement of the islanders, appeared in the bay four days after the landing of the Prince at Ajaccio ! The Prince was not much more popular in Corsica than in Paris ; nevertheless he was elected.

By the end of October the Bonapartist "bogey" had vanished from Paris as suddenly as it had appeared, and there was an end of all the wild talk about restoration plots and intrigues. For this collapse of the Bonapartist movement the Emperor was held responsible. His Majesty, incredible as it seems even now, had allowed himself to be interviewed at Chislehurst, and the article was declared to be published "by permission." Napoleon III., in this ill-judged statement, expressed his desire that all the world should know that, at the time, he was not at all ambitious, had not the least wish to take the management of affairs out of the hands of the Provisional Government, greatly disliked plots and intrigues, and believed that his adherents knew nothing about them!

These Chislehurst declarations, amounting to a manifesto, created consternation amongst his devoted followers in France, the most rabid Bonapartist journals vehemently asserting that it was unwise of the Emperor, not only to have published, but even to have uttered them. In London it was surmised that the "interview" had its *raison d'être* in a mild but firmly-expressed remonstrance by the Government, who, while readily consenting to allow the Emperor and Empress to reside here as long as they pleased, could not and would not run the risk of seriously offending the Provisional Government by apparently countenancing any of those plots or intrigues which were supposed to have their genesis at Chislehurst.

All this time the Royalist party had not been idle. MacMahon had not been long in power when the Legitimists sought to mature a long-conceived plan

for inviting the Comte de Chambord to occupy the vacant throne. A deputation waited on "Henry V." at Frohsdorf. The shop windows in Paris and the large towns displayed photographs of "the King," maps of France under Louis XIV., and records of the great events which occurred during the long reign of the Bourbons ; the terrible revolutions in which their governing system culminated were, however, unmentioned. Marshal MacMahon was said to have been in secret sympathy, not with the Chislehurst exiles, but with the Monarchists, whose "movement" came to naught. France would have neither Bonapartism nor Bourbonism.

It was, naturally, only after the Emperor's death that the world began to learn, by slow degrees, of the preparations for a restoration of the imperial *régime* which were made at Chislehurst between March, 1871, and December, 1872. I have often heard it said that the date of this second *coup d'état* was fixed for the spring of 1873, that Germany would have connived at a Bonapartist rising, and that the Great Powers were favourably disposed. All this seems to me incredible. The great mass of the French people execrated the name of Bonaparte. How could it have been otherwise ? It is highly significant that, although Mr. Blanchard Jerrold's "Life of Napoleon III." is an elaborate work in four volumes, only the final short chapter is devoted to Chislehurst, and in those few pages no reference is made to the plottings at Camden Place. It must be remembered, however, that this "Life" is an "official" one ; which may account for the author's silence concerning those restoration plans which were declared by the Comte de La Chapelle and one or two others to have

been "complete." Mr. Jerrold asserts that "the most notable of the afternoon discussions at Chislehurst" was that in which the Emperor renewed his conversation with the late Mr. Thornton Hunt* "on the idea of an International Arbitration Congress that had formed the subject of an interview at the Tuileries in March, 1865." Mr. Jerrold's work is so *documenté* throughout that the omission of even the slightest reference to the restoration episode is all the more marked, yet not, as I have hinted, surprising, in view of its avowedly official character.

In 1872 there was published a brochure entitled "Les Forces Militaires de la France en 1870." It purported to be written by the Comte de La Chapelle, but that gentleman, several years later, revealed the interesting fact that the work, from beginning to end, was from the Emperor's own pen. Napoleon III. admitted the authorship by writing on a copy of the pamphlet which he desired the Count to send to M. Saint-Genest: "Monsieur Saint-Genest, in a remarkable article published in the *Figaro*, asserts that the Emperor's *crime* was that of declaring war when he ought to have known that France was not prepared to wage it. It would be more just to say that the Emperor's mistake was that of reckoning upon the exactitude of the state of affairs and upon the possibility of reuniting in a few days the various elements of which the armies were composed.—NAPOLEON."

The Emperor naturally wished to give his pamphlet the widest possible circulation in France, for it was, as regards his policy and action respecting the war of

* A prominent member of the editorial staff of the *Daily Telegraph*.

1870-71, an *apologia pro vitâ suâ*. He sent the Comte de La Chapelle to Paris, with written instructions to get the French journals to review the work, "but," writes the imperial emissary, "I found myself confronted by a hostile organization which rendered me powerless to carry out my instructions. The heads of the imperialist party devoted to the Empress were opposed to the publication of the pamphlet; they decided, in their wisdom, that the organization of a conspiracy of silence would suffice to stifle the Emperor's words." That his expressed wishes should be thus disregarded by the heads of the party greatly incensed and pained the Emperor. He had his revenge, however, through the fairness of M. Saint-Genest, who, although an opponent of the Empire, impartially reviewed the pamphlet in the *Figaro*, and was thus the means of forcing the French and other papers to notice the imperial brochure.

"This incident," the writer continues, "was very advantageous to me. It made me acquainted with the intrigues of the systematic conspiracy created by the Regency against the Sovereign. I learnt how the statesmen who owed everything to the Emperor had not ceased to betray him both at the Tuileries and during the fatal campaign of 1870. I was able to follow with certainty the threads of this duplicity which had surrounded the Emperor on the throne and conducted him to the abyss, dragging into it France herself. I asked the Emperor if it was necessary to consult M. Rouher respecting a mission which I had to carry out at Paris. 'Certainly not,' said His Majesty. 'M. Rouher wants to do everything and does nothing. We want new men, independent, who do not believe that the first thing they have to do is to keep their places. Look for our collaborators amongst ardent men of liberal minds, who have been indicated to us, and do not trouble about the rest.'"

The Emperor may have had an "off" chance of returning to France and regaining the throne which had been lost to him partly through the manœuvres of the "war party," partly through the criminal neglect and incapacity of the heads of the army. He received "serious offers" to return to France, whilst Royalist divisions and intrigues, and the lack of unity amongst the Republicans, gave to the projects minutely studied in secret "chances almost certain of success." The organization for the Emperor's return to France was complete, on paper, although it had been directed by very few of the initiated. The ordinary heads of the Bonapartist party appear to have been entirely in the dark as to what was happening; the Prince Imperial was kept *au courant* of the plottings.

A few Englishmen doubtless knew pretty well what was going on behind the scenes at quiet Chislehurst. Mr. Borthwick (as the late Lord Glenesk then was) and Lord Sydney (a neighbour of the exiles) were probably in the secret; and if they were aware of the restoration plot, it is certain that Queen Victoria and the then Prince of Wales did not lack information. One other person certainly knew, perhaps better than anybody else, the details of the Chislehurst project for restoring Napoleon III. to his throne—that was the late Monsignor Goddard, who, in his clerical capacity, was at Camden Place every day.

Thiers had been defeated in the Chamber, there was said to be unmistakable reaction in favour of the Empire, the guarantees of support which came to Chislehurst were incontestable, the Republic existed only in name, and the Emperor was expected. "It

was proved to us," writes the Emperor's optimistic collaborator, "that the majority of the French people would then have accepted the imperial restoration, whilst all Europe, which had not ceased to regard Napoleon III. as the legitimate Sovereign of France, turned its gaze upon him. But all the devotion, all the hopes, vanished before the designs of Providence. The Emperor's malady had made such progress that, in view of the duties imposed upon him by his position, His Majesty did not hesitate to undergo an operation which he had anticipated, and which had become necessary. 'In a month we shall be on horseback!'—this summarizes the last confidential conversation which I had with the august invalid a few days before his death. I have no more to say. The time is not yet come to unveil the innermost secrets of one to whom I was sincerely attached in the land of exile, and who honoured me with a friendship which I shall never forget."

"An enormous name has passed out of the living world into history." This was the striking opening sentence of the leading article which the *Times* devoted to the event of January 9, 1873. ". . . We may dismiss his sojourn at Chislehurst in a line or two. His life passed there uneventfully and in apparent tranquillity. Silent, self-reserved, and self-controlled, he did not take the world into the secret of his regrets or remorse. If his party raised their heads again, and bragged of a new revolution to their profit while France was struggling still in the social and financial chaos into which they had cast her, we have no reason to believe he gave them encouragement. Disappointed adventurers might talk and act madly when life was short. But the Emperor returned to England, whose life and people he had always liked, and lived like an English country gentleman whose



THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON III. AT CHISLEHURST.

The date of this portrait is April, 1871, a few weeks after the Emperor's arrival from Wilhelmshöhe.

To face p. 64.

shattered health condemns him to retirement and the society of a few intimates. There were attached friends with him when he died, and if constancy should command friends, few men deserved friends better. It was unfortunate for his reputation that he was spared to live out his life."

This generous view of the bearer of that "enormous name," so characteristic of the *Times* from Delane down to its editor of to-day, does not, in regard to the "uneventful" nature of the exile's life at "Camden," at all accord with Comte de La Chapelle's version of the restoration propaganda carried on at Chislehurst after the Emperor's return from captivity. And it must be remembered that the Count speaks with exceptional knowledge of all that passed within Camden Place until the untimely death of Napoleon.

Whilst the Bonapartists were devising plans for the restoration of the Empire, Napoleon III. was not—so we are now assured—altogether forgotten by the desperadoes whose leaders, Orsini and Pierri, had paid the penalty of their crimes as far back as 1858. Curious indeed was it to see a London daily journal publishing in 1908 an account of the concoction of the Orsini plot in a restaurant "still to be found in Soho," and asserting that "the great international detective who subsequently revealed this fact had, in the course of his career, to keep a daily observation upon the man whom Orsini failed to kill—Napoleon III.—when he fled to this country."

Those who have personal cognizance of what happened at Chislehurst prior to the death of Napoleon III. are lamentably few in number—so few that they may presumably be counted on the fingers of one hand. This small knot of survivors will, I take it,

read the statements now made with amazement : “ It was during the Emperor’s residence at Chislehurst that his enemies kept him under constant surveillance, the spies, armed with field-glasses, occupying a windmill near to Camden House.* All the movements of the Emperor and his *entourage* were carefully reported in a diary, and not the least curious part of the business was that a facsimile of this same daily report was every morning laid upon the Emperor’s desk, the spies being themselves ‘ shadowed ’ and their reports surreptitiously copied.”

The London paper from which these details are extracted also published a photographic reproduction of one of the Orsini bombs. This illustration “ is authenticated by a Belgian nobleman, who says it is the exact reproduction of a bomb seized at the lodgings of the conspirator Orsini after the outrage. As nearly as I can recollect, the Prefect of Police had found six in the *appartement* of this man. One, it seems, was sent to the Emperor, another to the Prefecture, a third to the Municipal Laboratory, and three were handed to the Museum of Artillery. It is one of these three bombs which I now have in my possession by inheritance.”

The Duc de Bassano and the Duc de Cambacérès have been named as forming the principal members of the imperial household at Chislehurst. They did not owe their titles to Napoleon III., but to Napoleon I. Only five Dukes were created by Napoleon III. They were Malakoff, Magenta, Tascher de la Pagerie, Persigny, and Morny. The first dukedom, conferred on Marshal Pelissier, of Crimean celebrity, has been

* A misprint, common enough, for Camden Place. The “ wind-mill ” is somewhat of a puzzle.

long extinct, as the Marshal left no male issue. A similar fate has befallen the ducal title of Persigny, the second Duke having died a quarter of a century ago. Persigny had the misfortune to marry the daughter of the eccentric *Princesse de la Moskowa*, who got her husband into hot water on more than one occasion. When Persigny was appointed by Napoleon III. Ambassador at our Court, Lord Palmerston let it be known at the Tuileries that it would be politic for the Marshal-Duke to leave his wife behind him, as reports of her eccentricities had already reached London. But it was not to be, and the unpleasant necessity of receiving the fiery-tempered Ambassadors was forced upon Queen Victoria, who had also heard disquieting accounts of the lady.

Before they had been long at Albert Gate, the Persignys gave a grand ball, and, as the Queen had promised to be present, the Duchess provided herself with a costume calculated to make a sensation in English society. Unfortunately, the dressmaker had let out the secret of this marvellous robe, and when the Queen arrived, *Mme. de Persigny*, to her rage and mortification, saw that a lady in the royal suite was wearing a dress which was the exact counterpart of her own. Unable to restrain her fury, the Ambassador approached the lady, and, in the Sovereign's presence, literally smacked her face. Shocked beyond expression at the outrage, the Queen left the Embassy immediately, and what had promised to be the most brilliant entertainment of the season came to an untimely end. But the scandal did not end here. Lord Palmerston informed the French Foreign Office that both the Sovereign and the nation had been grossly insulted, and very shortly afterwards the

Ambassador, on the plea of illness, retired from his post without even requesting an audience of the Queen for the purpose of presenting his letter of recall. Persigny had been one of the most determined opponents of the Emperor's marriage, and perhaps the Empress was not unduly cast down when she learnt of what had happened at Albert Gate. After her husband's death the Duchesse married a M. Le Moyne, and again became a widow. It is related of her that she allowed her daughter to be prosecuted for aiding and abetting a felony, rather than pay a few thousand francs to stop the legal proceedings. No wonder Paris society gave the cold shoulder to the termagant daughter of the Princesse de la Moskowa.

The Duc de Magenta, who died in 1894, was best known to the world at large as Marshal MacMahon, the successor of M. Thiers in the Presidency. He married Mlle. de Castries, sister of the Duc de Castries, who for many years was a prominent figure in the world of sport. Their two sons entered the army, and their only daughter is the widowed Comtesse de Piennes, whose husband had been a Chamberlain of Napoleon III.

Probably the best-remembered of Napoleon III.'s quintet of Dukes of his creation is he who has been the longest dead—De Morny, the Emperor's natural brother. He was the illegitimate son of the ex-Queen Hortense (mother of Napoleon III.) and General Comte de Flahault de la Billarderie. De Morny interests us because his father, Flahault, was Louis Philippe's Ambassador to England from 1842 until 1848, and married, in 1817, the daughter of Admiral Viscount Keith, who became in her own right Baroness Keith and Nairne, and died in 1867. Her daughter

Emily married, as his second wife, the fourth Marquis of Lansdowne, and became the mother of the present Marquis, of Lord Fitzmaurice, and of Lady Emily Digby. The Duc de Morny, father of the present bearer of the title, was, like his imperial half-brother, *galant homme*, and boasted a large acquaintance with ladies of all ranks, most of whom have died since the imperial family found shelter in this country. Fortune did not deal too kindly with some of them. If we are to credit a trustworthy annalist, as recently as 1892 one of them, who had formerly enjoyed the handsome "pension" of £1,200 a month, might have been seen hawking fish in the back-streets of Paris.

In the year 1888 there passed away a very popular member of the imperial circle in the person of Mr. Olliffe, son of the creator, in conjunction with the Duc de Morny, of Deauville. His father, the well-known Sir Joseph Olliffe, was physician to H.B.M. Embassy in Paris, and also to the Duc, when the star of Bonapartism shone most brightly. Probably, wrote a popular *chroniqueur*, had not blue pills and Turkish baths carried off the Emperor's half-brother, Trouville would have hidden its diminished head, and Deauville would have reigned in its stead. De Morny's death was a great blow to Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie. His illness had not caused any alarm. The Duchesse had gone to a fancy-ball, and returned home to find her husband dying. Mme. la Duchesse was long inconsolable, but ultimately she married the Duc de Sesto,* cousin of the Empress Eugénie.

The daughter of the late and sister of the present Duc de Morny figured extensively and discredibly

* He died early in 1910 ; the Duchesse in 1896.

in the journals in 1907. She married the Marquis de Belbœuf, obtained a divorce from him, and has retained her maiden name. In the January of 1907, Mlle. (or Mme.) de Morny and Mme. Colette Willy, wife of the well-known author of "Claudine à l'École," had the fantastic idea of appearing at that delectable establishment, the Moulin Rouge, in a pantomime written by Mme. de Morny. The piece was called "Le Rêve d'Égypte," and in it the old Duc's fair daughter appeared as a mummy, whom a magician (Mme. Colette Willy) recalled to life, with the result that the mummy fell in love with her re-creator. It was a charming piece, as will be gathered from this brief description of it. It was said of this surprising production that it "shocked the susceptibilities of the audience, more especially as it dealt lightly with a certain class of immorality." That was an English critic's opinion of it. A Moulin Rouge audience is not the most fastidious in the world, but it would not have "The Egyptian Dream," or Mme. de Morny (although she is the niece of Napoleon III., and may address the Empress Eugénie as aunt), or Mme. Colette Willy, at any price. A storm broke out, and—but, really, what happened is indescribable. The manifestation against the ladies was highly approved by the Press as being "a righteous protest against the belief that Paris will stand anything."

The Napoleonic legend has not received much respect at the hands of either the daughter or the son of the Emperor's half-brother. Many years ago the present Duc made himself ridiculous by dancing a *pas seul* from the ballet of "Excelsior" in short gauze skirts, which he managed with the skill of a *première danseuse*. He was much blamed, too, for

his conduct towards the actress Mlle. Feyghine (she committed suicide), daughter of a retired Colonel in the Russian Army, who resided at Moscow. The Duc inherited the vast wealth which his father had acquired in a variety of ways, including that shady finance which was rampant in the halcyon days of the Second Empire. Of De Morny père, when he was Comte, it is related that, calling on one of the Rothschilds, he was received by the celebrated financier in a rather offhand way. "Monsieur," said he, upon being requested to take a chair, "do you know who I am? I am the Comte de Morny." "Monsieur le Comte de Morny!" exclaimed the scion of the Rothschilds, in his most impressive manner; "then, pray have the goodness to take *two* chairs."

If the handwriting of Napoleon III. was no better when he was busily occupied in literary work than it was in 1870 and the two following years—it could not have been worse—his "copy" must have caused the compositors to blaspheme. What the "proofs" were like, only the author and his foster-sister, Mme. Cornu, knew. The caligraphy of Napoleon I. was even inferior to that of his nephew. "His passionate vehemence and impenetrable dissimulation both," says Masson, "stand revealed in the manner in which he wielded his pen;" while the late J. F. Nisbet commented on "the furious illegibility" of Bonaparte's manuscript and "the apparently unconscious leaps and bounds of the imperial pen," which convinced the celebrated graphologist, Michon, "that Napoleon I. possessed the insane temperament." But the worst enemies of Napoleon III. never attributed any of his acts and deeds to mental derangement.

Concurrently with the arrival of the exiles there

sprang up a continuous and ever-growing demand for violets. It is never too late to learn, and inquiries in many quarters taught me that this was the floral symbol of the House of Bonaparte. As, however, no one knew the origin of the emblem, I pursued my investigation ; and, at the risk of becoming tedious, I will explain, for the benefit of the curious in these and kindred matters, precisely how the violet came to be the imperial flower.

Three days before Napoleon I. embarked for Elba, the exile, accompanied by the Duc de Bassano (grandfather of the bearer of the title who died in 1906, and father of the veteran Duc whom we knew at Chislehurst and Farnborough Hill) and General Bertrand, was strolling through the gardens at Fontainebleau. Napoleon was still undecided whether he would quietly resign himself to his banishment. The Duc de Bassano gently indicated that the time for withdrawal was past. Napoleon, much excited, walked on without speaking, endeavouring to divert his thoughts from the subject. Close to him was a child picking violets and tying them in a bunch. "My little friend," said Bonaparte, "will you give me your flowers?" "Gladly," said the boy, and handed them gracefully to the Emperor, who kissed the little giver, and, after a few minutes, remarked : "The accident of this occurrence is a secret hint to me to follow the example of these modest flowers. Yes, gentlemen, henceforth the violet shall be the emblem of my wishes."

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "I hope for your Majesty's glory that this resolution will not last longer than the flower from which it takes its origin." The next day Napoleon was seen walking about the gardens with a bunch of violets, which he carried alternately in his

hand and his mouth. Stopping at one of the beds, he stooped to pick some flowers. The violets were rather scarce at that spot, and the grenadier Choudieu, who was on guard, said to the Emperor: "Sire, in a year's time it will be easier to pick them; they will be more plentiful then." Bonaparte, astonished, looked at him: "You think, then, that next year I shall be back?" "Perhaps sooner—at least we hope so." "Soldier! do you not know that after to-morrow I start for Elba?" "Your Majesty will wait till the clouds pass." "Do your comrades think like you?" "Almost all." "They may think it, but they may not say it. After you are relieved, go to Bertrand, and let him give you twenty gold Napoleons; but keep silence."

Choudieu returned to the barracks, and told his comrades that for the last two days the Emperor had been walking about with a bunch of violets. "We will call him amongst ourselves 'Père la Violette.'" And that is how they called him in the barracks. By degrees the public came to hear of it, and in the spring the adherents of the ex-Emperor wore the flower as a memorial.

CHAPTER IV

THE REAL CAUSE OF THE EMPEROR'S DEATH

ON January 9, 1873, Napoleon III. died at Chislehurst, to the dismay and bewilderment of the little Court at Camden Place and of his numerous friends in France and England. It was shortly before Christmas that the imperial household had begun to vaguely realize that the Emperor was seriously ill. He himself had no idea of his approaching end. It is true that he somewhat dreaded the performance of the operation which had been decided upon, but only a few days before his death he had written to his friend and literary collaborator, the Comte de La Chapelle: "In a month's time I shall be in the saddle again." And Dr. Baron Corvisart wrote five days before the Emperor's death in these terms :

"CAMDEN PLACE,
January 4, 1873, 8 p.m.

MY DEAR COUNT,

I send you, with great pleasure, news of His Majesty. As you know, the operation of crushing goes on successfully. To-day the Emperor dined. He has no fever. All is going on as well as we could wish, and you would read that upon our faces could you see them. I hope that each séance will pass off as well, and that it will not be necessary to have many more. The Emperor wishes you to hear this good news, and directed me to write to you.

BARON CORVISART."

The trains going to and from Chislehurst carried, amongst others, Sir Henry Thompson and Sir William Gull—the first a keen-visaged, hawk-eyed man, with a face strongly suggestive of a French cavalry officer ; the second rather heavy of countenance, thoughtful, solemn. It was the latter of whom the Duke of Cambridge writes in his Diary (December 15, 1871), *à propos* of the illness of the then Prince of Wales : “ Gull has been an angel in this dreadful trial, and deserves the blessings of the nation.” The first days of January, 1873, despite Baron Corvisart’s optimism, proved full of anxiety for all at Camden Place. We can picture the last scene : Cæsar, dull-eyed, his face furrowed by acute pain, is stretched on his simple bed. Around him, or in the next room, stand Sir William Gull, Baron Corvisart, Dr. Conneau, and Sir Henry Thompson, looking keener-eyed than ever, for the critical moment is at hand. The clock points to 9.45 a.m. The Emperor seems better. The doctors, after consultation, have resolved to operate at noon. The pulse is “ 84, strong and regular ”; and Clover is there, ready, when the time comes, to administer the chloroform. It is 10.25. Signs of sinking suddenly betray themselves. The heart’s action fails ; the clock chimes the quarters (10.45) ; Napoleon III. is common clay !

The Comte de La Chapelle asserts that :

“ The Emperor did not die of the operation performed by Sir Henry Thompson. That operation, which had necessitated several séances, had been completely successful. The state of the august invalid—the official bulletins show it—was satisfactory, and Baron Corvisart’s letter is a conclusive proof of my assertion. Sir Henry Thompson had completely

succeeded on two other occasions, and January 9 was fixed for the last operation. To lessen the Emperor's sufferings and assure him sleep Sir William Gull had prescribed some doses of chloral, to be taken in the evening ; but, animated perhaps by a presentiment, the Emperor obstinately refused to take it, saying he was not in pain, that the chloral had oppressed him the previous night, that he did not mind the pain if it returned, as he was accustomed to it, and that, any way, he had made up his mind not to take the chloral. To overcome the Emperor's obstinacy, the Empress was sent for, and at her earnest request the Emperor, after much hesitation, consented to take the fatal dose which was to have secured him a night's sleep. . . . When he had drunk it the Emperor slept profoundly. It was 9 p.m. He slept, to awake again only for a few seconds the next morning, at ten o'clock, when he uttered two or three words and expired."

Comte de La Chapelle thus continues his extraordinary story :

"I arrived at Camden Place, and, in the disorder which first prevailed as the result of a *dénouement* as tragic as unexpected, I was a witness of the lively recriminations which took place between the surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, and the doctor, Sir William Gull, and thus it was that I learnt for certain the real cause of the Emperor's death. A little later I found myself in the middle of a group of weeping friends who had arrived in haste at Camden Place. They asked Dr. Conneau what could have caused the Emperor's death at the very moment when his recovery was regarded as certain. Dr. Conneau sobbingly replied that it was impossible for the moment to say precisely what had caused the Emperor to die so suddenly. I made known what I had heard, and I explicitly stated that the Emperor had been poisoned by inadvertence. It would be difficult

to express the profound sensation produced by my words. I was, so to speak, dragged into some private rooms, and, after my detailed account of what I had learnt by chance, a person in authority begged me to preserve silence about a fact as painful as it was irremediable. However, some time afterwards there was a lively discussion in the London medical papers, and the facts which I have related were enunciated, but not affirmed, and the result of the autopsy, cleverly drawn up as it was to safeguard those responsible, put an end to further controversy, without solving the question. It was said that the operation of lithotrity had been cleverly performed by Sir Henry Thompson, and that the operation had not caused death."

A telegram in the early editions of the evening papers was the first intimation I had of the Emperor's death. I immediately left the Temple for Chislehurst. My card, and perhaps a little inherent audacity, procured me admission to the house, where the air seemed already impregnated with the indescribable odour of death. The servants were moving hurriedly about, and there was that general air of confusion which is always the accompaniment of such scenes. I was a little bewildered at first at finding myself in the bustle, not knowing a soul to speak to. I speedily recovered my calm, for I felt that I was there, not as an idler, but in the position of one charged with the duty of placing before the readers of the *Morning Post* as complete a narrative of the Chislehurst drama as I could possibly contrive to put on paper before midnight.

A chill ran down my spine as I reflected that my mission might possibly be an ignominious failure. I knew, moreover, that nothing but cold facts would meet with my editor's favour. Again, that editor was

an intimate friend of the Emperor and Empress, and he was not the man to pass a single word concerning which I could not have made a statutory declaration that it was accurate and undeniable. Well . . . a tall servant came to say that M. Pietri would see me. My inexperience caused me to think that this was rather a good sign, and I followed the giant servitor into a room close by. I confronted M. Pietri. He seemed both astonished and pained that I was desirous of hearing something authentic about the great event which had occurred in the morning. He surveyed me with a bland look of pity, and I felt that he considered me a very impertinent young man to intrude upon him at such a moment. He was as mute as a carp.

What I learnt from the Emperor's secretary was that Napoleon III. was dead ; he had no other information to give me. I left the room and went into the hall, reflecting that, if the English medical men were in the house, I might fare better than I had fared with M. Pietri. I was told that Sir Henry Thompson was in a certain room, and I proceeded thither, full of blind confidence. Sir Henry appeared thunderstruck at my request for information. "Information! For whom?" "For my paper first, and so for all the world, for everybody is waiting to hear how His Majesty died." "I may tell the story myself some day," he said dryly ; and the interview closed.

Nonplussed, but not yet abandoning all hope, I lingered in the hall, no one taking the slightest notice of my presence. A stately-looking, venerable man was, like myself and others, wandering rather aimlessly about, and, learning that he was the Duc de Bassano, I addressed myself to him with fair results. He was all sympathy and graciousness, and, although

overwhelmed by the catastrophe, told me to come down on the following day, when I should see the illustrious dead.

The story of the Emperor's malady as narrated by Professor Germain Sée is so remarkable that I append a verbatim translation of it :

"I had never had the honour of attending the Emperor when, on June 20, 1870 [less than a month before the declaration of war], I was commanded to the Palace of St. Cloud. The carriage of the Préfet of Police, M. Pietri [nephew of the gentleman who was the Emperor's secretary, and in 1910 is still secretary of the Empress Eugénie], waited at the door for me. At the Palace the Emperor received me in an immense room, which was open to all the winds of heaven, and gave one a vague idea of the Place de la Concorde in winter. The room was bitterly cold. Napoleon III. was enveloped in blankets. With the exception of the Empress and Dr. Corvisart no one knew of my presence at St. Cloud. For prudential reasons it was given out that I was considering the wisdom of sending the Emperor to one of the health-resorts.

After a few words the Emperor lent himself willingly to my examination, which lasted an hour. It had been said that the Sovereign was afflicted with diabetes, that he was suffering from heart disease, and so on. But I saw immediately that this was not true. Moreover, I understood at once whither to direct my diagnosis. I asked the Emperor to tell me the history of his life since 1864, adding : 'Were you not very ill that year?' He looked surprisedly at me, dismissed Dr. Corvisart, and then communicated to me the following facts.

The Emperor said : 'You are right. It really is since 1864 that I have suffered. Do you remember the accident which happened to us at Neuchâtel? We were going—the Empress, myself, Princesse Anna Murat, and Mme. Carette—to visit the grave of my

mother, when, the horses running away, we were thrown from the carriage and all of us injured. Have you any recollection of it !' 'Yes, Sire ; all the more so as, being the medical attendant of the Princes Murat, I was called in to attend Princesse Anna. Her Highness had two fractures of the upper jaw, and the nerve of the face was paralyzed.' 'That's right. At that time I was very ill, and when the public believed me to be really at the bedside of the Empress, I was really in bed myself, and it is from that period that my first hæmorrhage dates.' 'How many, Sire, have you had ?' 'Four.' 'Doubtless, Nélaton and Ricord have been put *au courant* of these details ?' 'I have said nothing about it to anybody,' answered the Emperor.

And it was true. Not only had the Emperor no longer much confidence in Nélaton, but he, moreover, distrusted him for quite a personal reason which I cannot reveal. He preferred to keep to himself the details which he had given me, and which showed the situation under quite a new light. I had made up my mind. I did not, however, make my opinion known to the Emperor, but I told him that a consultation was necessary. 'I believe you understand me thoroughly, and I have full confidence in you,' he remarked ; 'so arrange for a consultation with the other doctors.' Upon this I immediately wrote to Nélaton and Ricord, and to the Emperor's two medical attendants, Corvisart and Fauvel. Dr. Conneau was to attend the consultation, but only in the character of a witness of the proceedings. [Corvisart and Conneau remained the Emperor's medical attendants until his death.]

We met at Dr. Conneau's residence at 8 a.m. on July 1. I had thought that the consultation would not last more than half an hour, but, as a matter of fact, it occupied three hours. I began the proceedings in the following words : 'Gentlemen, I am the youngest, and I therefore require you to listen to me first. I shall not say much. The Emperor is suffering

from stone.' They all exclaimed against this view. Corvisart said it was a cold ; Fauvel, an abscess. I maintained that I was right, and I proceeded to prove it. I then described all the Emperor's symptoms, the pains which he suffered both when riding and driving ; in short, I fully explained all that I had discovered when I had examined His Majesty on June 20, and I wound up as I had begun : 'The Emperor has stone, and nothing else.'

When I had finished, Dr. Fauvel withdrew what he had said as to the abscess, and Corvisart his declaration respecting the cold. All were unanimous in expressing the opinion that I was right. Only one thing remained to be done—to again examine the Emperor with a view to operating. But Nélaton would not hear of that. 'It is absolutely necessary,' I insisted, 'and to operate immediately.' Ricord upheld my opinion, but Fauvel and Corvisart were of Nélaton's opinion. 'You understand,' said they, 'that we cannot treat the Emperor as we should treat an ordinary patient.' Nélaton drew me aside and said : 'How you run on, my dear fellow ! Remember what a great responsibility we are taking upon ourselves.' 'It's all one to me. The operation ought to have been performed six months ago. The patient is seriously threatened. There is only one thing to do, and that must be done at the earliest possible moment.' Ricord remarked : 'It must be done to-morrow. Any way, it must not be delayed beyond the day after to-morrow.'

Then the discussion recommenced. Unfortunately, it came to a question of voting. Only Ricord and I considered the operation an urgent matter. The three others asked for time to pronounce an opinion. 'Let the summer pass,' said Nélaton ; 'in September we will see about it.' [By September the Emperor was a prisoner at Wilhelms Höhe, and the Empress and the Prince Imperial were in England.] In vain I supplicated ; vainly I insisted on the Emperor's courage in bearing pain ; nothing I said was of any use ; there

were three to two. The examination of the Emperor, and consequently the operation, were postponed. I was charged with the duty of drawing up the result of the consultation, and it was agreed that on the next day but one, at the latest, it should be placed in the hands of Dr. Conneau, who was to get the signatures of all the doctors affixed to it, and then to communicate its contents to the Emperor and Empress.

On July 3 Dr. Conneau had the document, which was written throughout by me on four pages of English note-paper. The signatures of Nélaton, Ricord, Corvisart, and Fauvel were never obtained, and it was only on September 4 [the date of the proclamation of the Republic and the flight of the Empress] that I learnt that fact. And do you know my informant? None other than M. Hendié, secretary to Jules Favre, and later Préfet of Rouen, whom the Minister had sent to me to ask what the document meant. Everything was then explained. But how unfortunate it was that Dr. Conneau did not at least tell the Empress about it! It was just a year later that the Emperor [then at Chislehurst] knew all these facts—that is to say, a full year too late.”

Such is the medical history of the case as narrated by Dr. Germain Sée.

After the death of Napoleon III. *L'Union Médicale* reproduced M. Germain Sée's statement, with the following pertinent observations :

“Is it not infinitely probable that, if the result of this consultation had been communicated to the Empress, an examination of the Emperor would have taken place, that the existence of a calculus would have been confirmed, that the Empress would have demanded and have obtained immediate treatment, and that the declaration of war made three days after the consultation [an obvious error, this] would have been certainly deferred, and perhaps abandoned? What

an immense responsibility, then, was assumed by those who kept the consultation secret, and did not communicate it to the Empress, as the doctors had desired, and who allowed the Emperor, in his grave condition, to engage in that horrible war !”

Dr. Conneau is dead. He died without explaining the reason which prompted him to keep the result of the fateful consultation a profound secret. In his interesting work, “*La Maladie de l'Empereur*” (Paris, Paul Ollendorff, 1890), M. Alfred Darimon tells this curious story :

“In June, 1879, I was dining with Prince Jérôme Napoleon. Amongst the guests was Dr. Ricord, one of the medical men who had assisted at the consultation of July 1, 1870. [Fully detailed above.] It occurred to Prince Napoleon to ask Dr. Ricord, an old friend of his, how it was that the result of the consultation had been kept a secret, and that the *procès-verbal* contained only the one signature of Dr. Germain Sée. Dr. Ricord replied that his confrère, Dr. Nélaton, was the real culprit : he had feared that, if the diagnostics were known, he (Nélaton) would be called upon to operate on the Emperor. The slight success which he had had the previous year in operating on Maréchal Niel had frightened him as to the responsibility which he was exposed to, and, without actually refusing to sign the document, he had not evinced any desire to affix his name to the *procès-verbal* of the consultation. His colleagues had followed his example.

‘Voilà un homme,’ said Prince Napoleon, when Dr. Ricord had gone, ‘who has held the destinies of France in his hands. If that old man had spoken, we should not have had the horrible war of 1870.’

Prince Napoleon then narrated what had passed between him and Dr. Conneau after the Emperor's death. He had told me the story two or three times

already, but, by repeating it before several persons, he in a manner consecrated its authenticity. Amongst the Emperor's papers they found the original of the consultation signed by Dr. Sée. Prince Napoleon was stupefied by this discovery. After reading the document he saw Dr. Conneau in a corner, and spoke sharply to him :

'How is it that you came to conceal such an important document ?'

'One can say nothing to you,' replied Conneau, 'you are so violent.'

'But tell me now,' continued Prince Napoleon ; 'it is worth while taking the trouble to speak.'

'I showed the document to one [or "to those"] who had a right to see it, and in good time,' said the poor doctor, hanging his head.

'And what was the answer ?' asked the Prince.

'The answer was: "Le vin tiré, il faut le boire."'

"These declarations of Dr. Conneau," says M. Darimon, "tend to incriminate the Empress. It would result from them that she knew the conclusions of the consulting doctors. That is a grave accusation which ought not to be lightly accepted. Dr. Conneau, though an excellent man, thoroughly devoted to the imperial family, must nevertheless be included amongst those men whom the Gospel calls weak-minded. Placed suddenly in presence of a terrible responsibility, which up to then he had not suspected, he probably sought to extricate himself therefrom by taking shelter behind a higher, and at all events a less vulnerable, personality. If the document was really found in the Emperor's cabinet, it is impossible that it should have remained there absolutely ignored. I repeat, it is a mystery which will never be penetrated. The Ministers knew nothing of it. I have been assured of that several times by Ollivier and by Maurice Richard. Ollivier has constantly said to me : 'I swear that my colleagues and I were ignorant of the Emperor's malady. Had we known of it, we

should not have let him take the command of the army, and we would have kept him in Paris. It is a crime to have kept in a drawer a document which might have exercised a capital influence over the resolutions of the Government.' ”

The Emperor himself, although he was frequently spoken to on the subject of the mysterious document, always answered that he could not understand why the nature of his malady had been concealed from him—why the result of the consultation was not made known to him on the eve of the declaration of war. “ I should never,” said His Majesty, “ have allowed myself to be dragged into and off to the war had I known that the most eminent surgeons in Paris had been of the opinion of Dr. Sée, who had explicitly declared that I was suffering from a *maladie de la pierre*, and that an operation was urgently necessary.” It has been said that the nature of the Emperor's malady was really known to the Empress as well as to His Majesty's *entourage* ; however this may be (and the Empress strenuously denies it), the Emperor certainly remained in ignorance of it until he had reached Metz, when the agony became insupportable.

Amidst all these doubts and contradictions, perhaps *la vérité vraie* is to be found in the explicit assertions of the Comte de La Chapelle, whose relations with the Emperor, as we have seen, were of the most intimate character. He says: “ M. Émile Ollivier's affirmation cannot be doubted ; it is perfectly in accord with the statements of Dr. Conneau, and it agrees with the conversations which I myself had with Napoleon III. ; but the former Prime Minister [M. Émile Ollivier] is deceived if he believes that the Emperor's malady was equally unknown to all his

colleagues. On that point, as on so many others, his colleagues of the Foreign Office would have been able to enlighten him, but the Prime Minister—extraordinary fact!—was certainly not always kept *au courant* of the final incidents of the Hohenzollern affair, created by a fatal influence which seized upon the Emperor and forced his hand.”

A curious coincidence remains to be noted. We know, from statements made publicly, and never, I think, controverted, that in the year 1866 a well-known medical man, Dr. Guillon, had recognized the necessity of a vesical examination of Napoleon III. This fact is confirmed by the doctor's son, Dr. Alfred Guillon, who, in an interesting and detailed letter, written to Comte d'Hérisson seventeen years after the Emperor's death—viz., in 1890—narrates how his father, at the request of Dr. Alquié, medical inspector of the Vichy waters, examined the Emperor, and operated on him three times, going subsequently, by His Majesty's desire, to see him at Vichy, the health-resort which owed its vogue to the Emperor. Dr. Alfred Guillon concludes by remarking that Napoleon I. at Waterloo, and when he went on board the *Bellerophon*, suffered in the same way as Napoleon III.; and he adds that, by a singular coincidence, to which, I think, no other medical authority has directed attention, both the First and the Third Napoleons lost their thrones owing to “une maladie des voies urinaires.”

Dr. Debout d'Estrées, an eminent French medico, practising at Nice and Contrexéville, has given his views on the malady of Napoleon III. In his valuable work, “The Causes of Gravel and Calculus,” this authority writes :



DR. DEBOUT D'ESTRÉES.

To face p. 86.

"We know that it was impossible to complete the operation, as it was only half over when the patient succumbed.

The nucleus of this stone consisted of a kernel of uric acid and urates, on which several layers of phosphates were superimposed.

Sir Henry Thompson is of opinion that the misuse of alkaline waters stimulated the formation of these concentric layers, which were further increased by the irritation subsequently set up, as a natural consequence, in the bladder. The outermost layers, which corresponded in point of time with the period of the war and the fatigue induced by riding on horseback, in a patient under such conditions, were, as the operator clearly pointed out, irregular and rugose."

Statement by Dr. Debout d'Estrées, 1910.

In April, 1873—three months after the operation on the Emperor—Sir William Gull, Queen Victoria's doctor, said to me: "*I advised the Emperor not to undergo an operation, the condition of his kidneys being such as to make me fear that any operation would be fatal.*"

As a matter of fact, the presence of the stone in the bladder for such a long period had caused an inflammation of that organ *which had extended to the kidneys.*

The real cause of the Emperor's death was, then, blood-poisoning (*urémie**), and not what the Comte de La Chapelle describes as an "overdose of chloral administered by the Empress Eugénie."

The operation performed by Sir Henry Thompson removed only half of the stone, the fragments of which ought to have been extracted naturally, and not, as in

* An accumulation of urine in the blood.

our days, by aspiration. The other half of the stone is in the possession of the Empress Eugénie.

The existence of the stone was known *before the war*. Why was not an operation performed? I cannot say; *perhaps* it was because His Imperial Majesty's surgeon, Professor Nélaton, had recently operated on Marshal Niel (then War Minister), who died after the operation.

In those days antiseptic treatment, which has since saved so many lives, was not practised. Pasteur and Lord Lister have enabled surgeons to do what they could not previously attempt.

Sir William Gull said to me: "*I told the Emperor Napoleon, when he sat in the armchair you are now sitting in, not to undergo an operation.*"

Many discussions took place afterwards between French and English surgeons, but I was glad to personally put an end to the controversy, making Sir Henry Thompson and Professor Dolbeau dine together at the Café Royal (London) in April, 1874, and subsequently shake hands.

DEBOUT D'ESTRÉES.

VILLA GLORIA, NICE,
*February 22, 1910.**

* This important and convincing statement was courteously communicated to the author by Dr. Debout d'Estrées, Ancien Inspecteur des Eaux Minérales de Contrexéville, whose high reputation need not be emphasized. We learn from it for the first time the actual cause of the tragic death of Napoleon III. at Chislehurst in 1873. Until now the fact that Sir William Gull had advised the Emperor not to be operated upon has not been made known. It was stated authoritatively that Sir Henry Thompson's operation had been "completely successful"; it would now appear to have been the reverse. The Comte de La Chapelle's statement as to the "overdose of chloral" was, according to Dr. Debout d'Estrées,

Another Contrexéville expert has this comment on the above passage :

“From this human document arises a lesson for reflection on the part both of the historian and philosopher, since we know the immense influence exercised by the physical on the moral nature ; when we consider the clouding of the intellect, the enfeebling of strength and will-power, which may be induced by a morbid condition aggravated by torturing pain ; when we recall how another Napoleon—the First, the Great—is thought to have owed his defeat at Waterloo to the mischief which had smitten his bodily organs, we may well ask ourselves what would have happened if the water of the ‘Pavillon’ spring, carefully administered, had reduced the size of that stumbling-block on which the fortune of an empire was about to be wrecked, and, by rounding off the angles, had afforded beforehand to the future sufferer of defeat at Sedan ease of body, liberty of spirit and peace of mind, coolness, clearness of vision, and elasticity of energy.”

Had Napoleon III., who died on January 9, survived until April 20, he would have entered upon his sixty-fifth year. Napoleon I. died at the early age of fifty-two, his father at thirty-nine, and his grandfather at the same age ; and, according to M. Frédéric Masson, of the Académie Française, all three died of a cancerous affection of the stomach.*

Queen Victoria, who had been kept informed daily of the course of the Emperor's malady, wrote in the

inaccurate ; but he only reported what he assures us he heard at Camden Place on the day of the Emperor's wholly unexpected death.

* “*Napoléon et sa Famille*,” tome vii. ; Paris, Librairie Paul Ollendorf, 1906.

Court Circular of January 10 (Osborne) : " The Queen received with much regret the melancholy intelligence, at one o'clock yesterday, of the death of the Emperor Napoleon. Her Majesty immediately telegraphed a message of condolence, and shortly afterwards Colonel Gardiner, Equerry to the Queen, left Osborne for Camden Place with an autograph letter from the Queen to the Empress."

The Prince of Wales, attended by Colonel Teesdale, paid a visit of condolence to the Empress on the 11th. Her Majesty felt unequal to receive the Prince personally, but His Royal Highness stayed some time at Camden Place. The Prince said to Comte Davilliers : " I do not ask to see the Empress or the Prince Imperial. I only want the Empress to know that I have come in the Queen's name to present my homage." The funeral was not attended by the Queen or by any members of the Royal Family. The Duke of Cambridge was unable to be present when our Princesses went to take a last look at the Emperor on the day preceding the obsequies, but on the day after the funeral he had an interview with the Empress and the Prince Imperial. The Queen was represented at the funeral by Lord Bridport.

The *Journal Officiel* contained the curt announcement : " Napoleon died yesterday, the 9th January, at Chislehurst."

" Prince [Jérôme] Napoleon's chance is not worth discussing," wrote Mr. Blöwitz in the *Times*. The American Press condemned the Emperor's career from the beginning to the end.

The order for three months' mourning for the Emperor was couched in these terms :

"CAMDEN PLACE, CHISLEHURST,
le 17 janvier, 1873.

Le deuil à l'occasion de la mort de sa majesté l'Empereur Napoléon III. sera de trois mois, à partir du 10 janvier. Le grand deuil sera porté pendant les six premières semaines. Le petit deuil pendant les six semaines suivantes. Les hommes auront le crêpe au chapeau."

A member of the Marlborough Club (founded a few years previously by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh) wrote to the *Times* suggesting that "everybody" should follow the example of the Court, and go in mourning for a week, "as that would show the universal esteem in which His Majesty was held in this country." The suggestion did not meet with much approval.

I read with some trepidation (for I was the culprit) this paragraph in the *Morning Post* of January 18 :

"A singular mistake occurred in the report of the Emperor Napoleon's funeral. When the procession returned to the house, the Prince Imperial was saluted by the *ouvriers* and by a host of friends, and a cry was raised of 'Vive Napoléon IV.!' At this moment a lady, clad in the deepest mourning, appeared on the balcony, and in the haste and excitement of the occasion many imagined it was the Empress. It was not so. Her Majesty had never quitted the prayerful seclusion of her chamber. The figure that showed itself for an instant was the former governess (Miss Flowers) of the Prince Imperial, who in her emotion sought to look upon her old pupil in the supreme hour of his trial. The incident, by its misinterpretation, has given pain to the Empress, who would be much hurt if she were thought capable of accepting any public or political manifestation in the solemn hour when

her whole heart and thoughts were absorbed in sacred grief."

Supposing Napoleon III. had refused to be dragged into that calamitous war, what would have happened at his death? Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, in his lectures on Bonapartism delivered in the University of London,* expresses the opinion that his heir would still be on the French throne. Mr. Fisher may or may not be right in that surmise, said his reviewer in the *Times* (August 27, 1908); "but it is certain that the ruler of a constitutional monarchy, such as France must have become after the concessions of 1869 and 1870, would no longer have been the representative of Bonapartism. The sovereign people cannot delegate power at one and the same time to an individual and to a representative assembly."

"Eternal peace is not even a beautiful dream. War is one of God's own institutions and a principle of order in this world. In war the noblest virtues of man are brought out: courage and self-abnegation, fidelity to duty as well as love of self-sacrifice. The soldier offers his life. Without war the world would decay and be lost in materialism." Those are Moltke's words, and not only Lord Roberts, whose warning words, "Be ready!" stirred the country once more at the end of 1909, but every man who has worn the uniform, will endorse their accuracy.

"War is a game which, were their subjects wise, Kings would not play at." This was also true once on a time. But Kings (and Sultans) are not all-paramount now. Had Napoleon III. been absolutely paramount in 1870, there would have been no war with Prussia; but he was not, and we know how he

* Oxford University Press, 1908.

was forced into hostilities by the "war party." Many causes contributed to the defeat of the French at Sedan, but the outstanding fact was that they were vastly outnumbered. The relative numbers of the contending forces on September 2 (the day after the battle, the day of the humiliating but unavoidable capitulation) were—French, 80,000 ; Germans, 220,000 ; the former having rations for only one day.

The first anniversary of the death of Napoleon III. (January 9, 1874) was observed in Paris with unexpected solemnity. On the boulevards the demand for violets was enormous. The congregation attending the service at St. Augustin's, now, as then, the "Bonapartist Church," filled the large, handsome edifice. There were to be seen the ex-Queen Isabella of Spain (whose son, the playmate in childhood of the Prince Imperial, and between 1871 and 1874 the occasional companion of the Bonapartist Prince in London, was to ascend the throne of Spain within a year after this memorial service), Princess Girgenti (Isabella's daughter), Prince Joachim Murat, the Duc de Malakoff, M. Pietri (Prefect of Police under the Second Empire), General Fleury (like all the men, in evening dress), and all the members of the late Emperor's family in deep mourning. Observed also were Marshal and Mme. Canrobert, several Bonapartist deputies, Paul de Cassagnac (looking, as I had seen him look at Chislehurst at the funeral a year previously, the picture of woe), and the venerable Abbé Laisne (formerly chaplain at the Tuileries). An immense crowd gathered in the Place St. Augustin.

At the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois (close to that part of the Tuileries from which the Empress escaped on September 4) there was also a crowded

attendance, the people who were close enough being gratified by the unusual sight of the non-Catholic Prince (Jérôme) Napoleon kneeling in front of the altar. Close by were his wife (Princesse Clotilde) and his sister (the late Princesse Mathilde).

Some 1,500 people assembled at the Church of St. Eustache, many of them retired officers, some (veterans these) wearing the St. Helena medal! There was, too, a deputation from the popular corporation of the Dames de la Halle.

At two other churches—St. Clotilde and St. Amboise—there were likewise anniversary services. At the former might have been seen nearly all the aristocratic notabilities who were wont to attend the Court of the Tuileries ; at the latter the congregation was almost entirely composed of workmen.

CHAPTER V

IN THE BLUE SALON

THE Prince Imperial was drilling, with his fellow-cadets, on the morning of January 9, 1873, when Comte Clary, who had driven over to Woolwich immediately after the Emperor's death, was announced. Comte Clary did not tell the Prince that he was fatherless, but on the way back to Chislehurst he said enough to enable the boy to realize that he must be prepared to hear the worst. The aspect of everybody and everything at Camden Place destroyed the Prince's last hope.

"Tell me the truth," said the Prince, in faltering tones, to his mother. "I am strong enough to bear it."

When the Empress replied that his father was dead, the Prince did not speak, but, going into the death-chamber, threw himself on his knees and recited "Our Father" in Latin. He got up and took a long look at the dead; then, exclaiming, "I cannot stay here," hurried to his own room.

There the doctors, Corvisart and Conneau, told him all that had happened, and then, and only then, he gave way. By the next day the Prince was comparatively calm, much calmer than his mother, and exhibited his wonted energy and strength of character. Several times during that day the Empress

and the Prince knelt together in prayer by the Emperor's side. The "watchers" were the Duc de Bassano, the two doctors, Comte Clary, Comte Davilliers, M. Pietri, and M. Filon, who relieved each other every three hours.

The *ensevelissement*, or "laying-out," was performed by Comtes Davilliers and Clary, Dr. Conneau, and M. Pietri.

All the Chislehurst people had words of regret.

"It's a pity he's gone," said one of the humblest. "He was a very nice old gentleman."

"People say my father was a silent man," sobbed the Prince, shortly after the funeral; "but how many things he told me which are engraved upon my memory and in my heart!"

Prince Arthur (Duke of Connaught) and his brother, the late Prince Leopold, wrote in very affectionate terms to the Prince Imperial.

Amongst the first telegrams of condolence received by the widowed Empress was one from a French journeyman saddler. It ran: "Madame, N——, ouvrier sellier, enfant du peuple, partage votre douleur."

"He was so good. Never, never, never did he complain of anybody. He was too good—that was his only fault." This was the tribute of the members of the imperial household, one and all.

Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki said: "I was not by the side of the Empress in the days of her prosperity, but it consoles me to remember that I have been with her throughout all her misfortunes. How empty the house seems! The Emperor was like an oak-tree, round which everybody gathered, listening to wise words."

"It was not to the Emperor, but to the man, I was attached," declared faithful M. Pietri. "For myself, what does it matter whether I am at the Tuileries or here?" He never tired of referring to the Emperor's warm-heartedness, his affectionate and winning disposition. M. Pietri could not understand how the Emperor had contrived to conceal his terrible pain from everybody.

"For five years," said another old friend, "he had suffered from that *pierre, grosse comme un œuf*. Dr. Corvisart showed it to me. It was evident, from the autopsy, that the malady would soon have ended fatally. An operation was the only chance of prolonging his life for a time."

Sir Henry Thompson marvelled how the Emperor could have remained for five hours on horseback at the battle of Sedan: "The pain which he must have endured is indescribable."

The Empress had a long conversation with Sir Henry on the day after the Emperor's death, and warmly thanked him for his devotion. "You know," she said to the eminent surgeon, "I am not one of those who only value success."

Prince Charles Bonaparte, who had been in the army, and had held a command at Metz, was devotedly attached to his imperial relative. "I believe," said Prince Charles, "the Emperor fully understood his dangerous condition. Only a month ago, in this little room, we were discussing the extraordinary change of public opinion in France, and the inevitable restoration of the Empire. About this the Emperor had no doubt whatever. 'But,' he observed with a sad smile, 'it is a great pity that I am so ill!'"

M. Rouher, on returning to Paris from Chislehurst

in December, 1872, told a friend that Sir Henry Thompson was preparing the Emperor for the operation which was performed on the following 2nd of January. Two days after M. Rouher's statement a report was current in Paris that the Emperor was dead ; and when, on January 9, the fact was published the Parisians would not credit it.

* * * * *

It was the day after, and in the centre of the bedroom was the open coffin.

The Emperor was fully dressed, in the uniform of a French General of Division, and on the blue tunic the Empress had placed a red rose on his breast, close to the grand cordon, the cross, and the plâque of the Legion of Honour, the military and the Italy medals, and the blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter. The sword which he had tendered to the King of Prussia was by his side, the *képi* at his feet. Rings remained on his fingers. The embalming had left the face of a bright yellow hue—or so it seemed to me in the dull candlelight. Two Sisters and a gentleman of the household watched. No one else was in the room, for the venerable Duc de Bassano, after leading me to the death-chamber, had retired.

Downstairs I witnessed a bewildering bustle—members of the household flitting from room to room ; one was jostled by servants ; the carpenters who were arranging the hall for the lying-in-state hammered and sawed until the din became insupportable ; it penetrated even to the Empress's room overhead, to her great distress.

Bonapartism had expired with the disaster of September 1, and now the one man who possessed any power of galvanizing it into a new existence was

lying there, on that camp-bed, in the long sleep which knows no awakening. So this was the end of it ! The once all-powerful ruler of France, whose legions I had seen beaten back, until night mercifully hid them from our sight, was there in front of me, an inert mass, beyond the reach of friend and of foe ! All was quiet ; but as I passed out of the death-chamber and down the long avenue, whose trees sobbed a requiem, I seemed to hear the thunderous roar of the cannon, and the sharp “ping” of the bullets, and the infernal rattle of the mitrailleuses, mingled with the shouts of triumph from helmeted Teutons, as the victorious armies of Kaiser Wilhelm tramped along the Unter den Linden, lined with the French cannon which had done good service on the fields of Saarbrücken, of Weissenberg, of Wörth, of Gravelotte, of Sedan, and a dozen others.

The Empress caused it to be intimated to the French mourners that she would receive them on the day following the funeral.

It was mid-January, but the afternoon was spring-like.

The principal apartment at Camden Place was the Blue Salon, into which we were ushered, and formed into two semicircular groups. The corridor was lined on both sides by gentlemen. The ladies assembled in the dining-room, and were the first to be received by the Empress. (No English ladies were present, and the only Englishmen I saw were the Duke of Cambridge and Captain Baynes, of the Metropolitan Police.)

I will endeavour to reconstitute the scene.

All the blinds are still down. Moving noiselessly about, the Duc de Cambacérès, Grand Master of the

Ceremonies, murmurs instructions to one and orders to another. There is about this personage much more of the Bonapartist than is observable in his colleague, the Duc de Bassano ; he is the pink of courtesy, but lacks the geniality of his friend, whose kindness remains a fragrant memory. Surrounding the first-named, half a dozen officers and Ministers of the Second Empire exchange confidences in muffled tones. There are two Marshals: Lebœuf is one—he who boasted, the moment war was declared, that the French Army was so thoroughly equipped that not a gaiter-button was lacking. The other is Canrobert, who, although martyred by gout, contrives to walk without hobbling. Close by two other generals—Palikao and Goyon—stands a third, and him I regard with curiosity ; for this is Frossard, and I remember him at Saarbrücken. The man with the pleasant-looking English face is the Duc de Mouchy,* one of the half-dozen most prominent followers of the Third Napoleon, and husband of Princess Anna Murat, whose mother was an American, named Fraser, of New Jersey. Of course the Princes Murat are all in this mourning crowd.

And we are all interested at seeing stalwart, jovial General Fleury, Master of the Horse under the Empire, and later Ambassador at St. Petersburg, where the Empress-Regent made him stay in 1870, although he implored her to allow him to resign his diplomatic functions and join his old comrades in the field ; Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, who had been Minister of Marine ; Baron Haussmann, the creator of New Paris—he is conversing with the Marquis de Lavalette, the last of the Empire's Ambassadors to

* He died in 1909.

the Court of St. James; Carpeaux, the sculptor; cheery, round-faced, spectacled Baron Lambert, for twenty years the intimate friend of Napoleon III.; and the Baron de Pierres, the Comte de Brissac, Comte Marmesia, with scores besides, bearing names familiar to most English people. There is many a whispered consultation between the Duc de Bassano, M. Rouher, M. Pietri, M. Eugène Delessert (the Emperor's former secretary), and Comte Clary; and presently the doctors appear—Corvisart and Conneau.

We have been talking in undertones for more than an hour, when the clock on the mantelpiece chimes a quarter past two. Nothing is said, but instinctively our glances are turned towards the door. The sun shines in upon us through the white blinds—shines upon the Hope of France, who enters the Blue Salon, bowing right and left, like a young Sovereign, the grand cordon of the Legion of Honour across his breast. On his face there is a proud smile, full of hope. A week ago he was only the Prince Imperial—to-day he is Napoleon IV.

He is not yet seventeen; yet they made him "smell powder" at Saarbrücken. Worse, he was made to look ridiculous in the eyes of the world by the surreptitious publication of the Emperor's private despatch recounting the gallant behaviour of Louis before the enemy on the occasion of Frossard's splendid "victory" over a few hundred Prussians. Do you wonder that the sight of the "little Prince"—the new Emperor, Napoleon IV.—receiving the homage of the smashed and pulverized Bonapartist party brings tears into the eyes of young and old alike? The boy-Prince himself, by a violent effort, controls his emotion, but, fortunately, he has not to

open his lips—only to shake the hand of each and every man in that Blue Room, and allow his own hand to be kissed. This part of the ceremony over, the Prince takes up a position facing the door, and for the next five minutes there is unbroken silence. We are waiting for the Empress.

The coming of the imperial widow is heralded by the sobs and moans of those who line the corridor. The ladies, having been received by the Empress in the dining-room, have followed her through the sombre passages, and their emotion is contagious. We see coming towards us—tottering rather than walking—a figure of rather more than medium height, swathed in the deepest black, her cheeks of ashen whiteness, her eyes red and swollen with the tears which continue to flow. The Prince hastens to give her his arm, and so she passes round the Blue Room, as we all kneel to kiss the outstretched hands of the woman who, less than three short years ago, was the envied of her sex throughout the world, the Empress of the French, born “*son excellence Marie Eugénie Guzman, Comtesse de Téba, Grande d’Espagne de première classe.*”

Her Majesty has borne up most heroically while slowly passing along the ranks of those weeping veterans whose laurels were gained in the Crimea, where they fought side by side with our own soldiers—in Algeria, in Italy, and later on the sacred soil of their own France. She has seen them gazing wistfully and speechless from emotion into her swollen orbs, and has not completely broken down under the terrible strain. It is only when she finds herself confronted by a group of her son’s boy-comrades that she buries her face in her hands, and, sobbing, is

tenderly led, almost carried, away by her ladies-in-waiting.

A remarkable group of themselves, these fair members of the imperial widow's *entourage*. One of them is the Princesse de la Moskowa, and we remember that it was a daughter of that most eccentric lady of the same name whom the Duc de Persigny married, to his exceeding chagrin. Besides the amiable and witty Princesse de la Moskowa, there are in the suite of the Empress the Comtesse de la Poëze, Vicomtesse d'Aguado, Comtesse de Sancy, Mme. Sauley, Mme. Carette (who was later to publish some lively recollections of the Imperial Court), Mlle. de Larminat, and Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki—the two latter especially well known in this country, one as maid of honour, the other as “reader” to Her Majesty, first at “Camden” and later at Farnborough Hill.

The “little Prince” withdraws, accompanied by Comte Clary, General d'Espeuilles, and M. Augustin Filon, Prince Charles Bonaparte walking by his young relative's side. And so the function closes; and we stroll on the lawn, and talk of the future with Delessert and his bright son (one of the Prince's favourites), and dear old Baron Lambert.

The daily life at Camden Place was seldom changed. The room in which the Emperor died was always kept locked. The Empress was neither a player on any instrument nor a singer, but she made water-colour drawings of the room in which the Emperor died, and these drawings were later presented to M. Pietri. The Empress read the English newspapers before rising; the Prince was generally off for his early ride long before the appearance of the postman. All the household met in the picture-gallery, which contained

some fine Chaplins, at half-past eleven for lunch. Then were to be seen the Duc de Bassano, Comte and Comtesse Clary, Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki, Mlle. de Larminat, M. Filon, and M. Franceschini Pietri. After the "five o'clock" the Empress went for a drive or a walk, the Prince remaining at his studies. After dinner, at half-past seven, a very quiet evening was spent in the drawing-rooms. There was no music. The Prince read the English and French papers; some of the others played patience. The Empress retired very early. In those days, long before Cap Martin had attracted her, the Empress used to regularly winter at Florence—not because, as was asserted, she felt "a sensible *refroidissement* in the manner of the English Court and society" towards the imperial family, but because the dampness of Chislehurst was too much for her.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMPEROR'S PERSONALITY

BEFORE presenting some very unflattering portraits of Napoleon III., I would recall the Emperor as he struck me when he came to Chislehurst in March, 1871. A man of less than average height ; decidedly stout ; moustache and hair grey, or, to speak by the card, getting grey ; eyes which, ever and anon, flashed brightly ; the singularly large face with a heavy rather than the dreamy expression which, by common consent, marked him in earlier life ; the pose of the rather square body easy and undeniably dignified, whatever it may have been when a certain "Englishman" first met Prince Louis Napoleon. At Wilhelmsöhe he had had every facility for taking walking exercise ; but he was naturally of sedentary habits, and was, moreover, suffering acutely from the calculus, "as large as a pigeon's egg," which doubtless tended to shorten his days. His temperament was of the easy-going order, genial and kindly ; hardly the character that could refuse any favour that might be asked of him ; in brief, very prepossessing, most attractive—a man, as I have reason to know, greatly beloved by those who enjoyed his friendship, adored by his intimates. It is impossible to realize "Napoleon III. living in Circus Road, St. John's Wood, and drinking ale over the bar

of the Eyre Arms ;” yet that is how he was referred to in a London periodical in 1907 !

“ His face wan and pallid, its bony emaciated angles developed in prominent relief by the shaded lamps ; his upper lip covered with moustaches ; a lock of hair waving over a narrow forehead ; his nose large and long ; his eyes small and dull ; his attitude timid and anxious, bearing in no respect a resemblance to the Emperor—this man was the citizen Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.” That is “ how he looked ” when, on December 20, 1848, he was proclaimed President of the Republic in the National Assembly. The description is almost flattering when we remember that it is from the pen of Victor Hugo, to whom the Emperor of later days was “ Napoléon le Petit.”

Another close observer noted “ that well-known nose and well-waxed moustache, that retreating brain-cap and Dutch-built forehead.”

“ Everybody was struck by his short stature and his common appearance ; but his manners were good and not without dignity.” That is how Napoleon III. looked to Charles Greville, when the French Sovereigns first visited Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Windsor in 1855. The Queen was “ perfectly satisfied ” with both the Emperor and the Empress. “ The former,” wrote the candid Clerk of the Council, “ did his best to please the Queen. He had much to say to Her Majesty, amused her, and was a success.”

The Duke of Cambridge (then Prince George) wrote to Captain Mildmay on December 3, 1849 :

“ Louis Napoleon is a wonderful fellow. He does the most extraordinary things, apparently with impunity, and has gained popularity by them. Still, I fancy he cannot go on long in this way, and though

I think he certainly has a great deal of tact and talent, still, I think he has not enough to carry him through so vast an undertaking, and that he will consequently break down in the attempt of making himself Emperor, or First Consul, which he is evidently driving at."

Less than a year later, however, the Duke's Diary contained this significant entry (September 3, 1850) :

"I wish I could see Louis Napoleon reviewing the fleet at Cherbourg ; it will be a very fine sight, I think. I cannot but think that it must end by his being Emperor sooner or later. Wonderful, when one remembers the insignificant figure he cut in England."*

The Emperor had a sincere friend and wellwisher in the Duke of Cambridge, who always spoke of him as "the Emperor of the French." In December, 1872, when Napoleon was certainly ill, but not seriously, the Duke went to Chislehurst to inquire how the patient was progressing. In his Diary the Duke notes : "He was in bed, and I did not see him, but I sat a long time with her [the Empress]. She was most agreeable and chatty, and looked very well, and seemed in good spirits. The Prince Imperial was out." On January 9, 1873 (the day of the Emperor's death), the Duke wrote : "I grieve over it much, as he was ever most kind and frank with me, and I entertained for him a real and cordial regard and esteem."

Were M. Émile Ollivier asked to-day to express his opinion in a nutshell of Napoleon III., the veteran statesman and author of the ablest and most exhaus-

* "George, Duke of Cambridge. A Memoir of his Private Life." Edited by Edgar Sheppard, C.V.O., D.D., Sub-Dean of His Majesty's Chapels Royal. Longmans, Green and Co., 1906.

tive history of the Second Empire hitherto published, would probably repeat what he wrote in 1874 : " After a conversation, followed by many others, under serious circumstances, I found Napoleon III. the ablest and most serious statesman of all those, without any exception, whom I met during my long life amongst statesmen." That sentence formed a portion of the address which Ollivier prepared for his admission to the Institut. Some of the " Immortals " asked him to modify his praise of the Emperor, who had not been dead much more than a year ; Ollivier refused to change one word, with the result that the members decided that the public admission of their newly elected colleague should be indefinitely postponed !

Claude, the famous Claude, was Chief of Police under the Second Empire, and in his " Memoirs," issued in translated form in 1908, he thus sums up the Emperor : " Short-legged, with a long waist, he was framed like those great birds which are all body supported by webbed feet. He waddled as he walked, like a vulture. There was a mixture in this young man of the crafty bandit and the gentleman bandit. His countenance, almost burlesque, yet attractive, was not out of keeping with the corrupt faces around, which it mastered while harmonizing with them."

Claude was attached for a time to the section of the theatres, and he describes Louis Napoleon arriving at one of the playhouses " with unwashed hands and face to get a round of applause from the gallery." It was Claude, too, who had charge of the imperial baggage train in the first days of the war—the train which carried beds and frying-pans, " and a million in specie," and the state equipage in which the Emperor was to make his triumphant entry into Berlin. But is not the

"million in specie" a flight of fancy of M. Claude's? Anyway, we may be sure that what is meant is 1,000,000 francs, or £40,000, and one remembers that the captive Emperor wrote from Wilhelms Höhe to the Empress at Chislehurst: "I have not with me more than £8,000 (200,000 francs)," half of which he sent to Camden Place.

In the "Letters and Recollections of Julius and Mary Mohl" (edited by Mrs. Simpson, and published in 1888) the Emperor is thus depicted:

"He is as unlike the ideal Frenchman as possible. The ideal Frenchman is, before all, social; this man is lonely. The Frenchman is expansive; this man is close and traitorous. The Frenchman is gay; this man is grave, laughs but little. The Frenchman is brilliantly valorous; this man gets frightened. He ran away at Boulogne, and even his partisans cannot quote a single anecdote 'où il a payé de sa personne' with the temerity natural to the French. The French are open and frank, though not very truthful. You may get the truth out of them easily. The only point of resemblance is vanity. But his [the Emperor's] is a close vanity, like private drinking; theirs is an open, expansive vanity, like conviviality."

Mr. Justin M'Carthy, in his "History of Our Own Times," shows us Napoleon III. in the most unattractive light.

"There were some personal reasons for particular distrust of the upcoming Empire among the English people. Louis Napoleon had lived many years in England. He was as well known there as any prominent member of the English aristocracy. He went a good deal into very various society—literary, artistic, merely fashionable, purely rowdy, as well as into that political society which might have seemed natural to him. In all circles the

same opinion appears to have been formed of him. From the astute Lord Palmerston to the most ignorant of the horse-jockeys and ballet-girls with whom he occasionally consorted, all who met him seemed to think of the Prince in much the same way. It was agreed on all hands that he was a fatuous, dreamy, moony, impracticable, stupid young man. A sort of stolid amiability, not enlightened enough to keep him out of low company and questionable contact, appeared to be his principal characteristic. We cannot remember one authentic account of any Englishman of mark at the time having professed to see any evidence of capacity and strength of mind in Prince Louis Napoleon."

And Mr. M'Carthy quotes this rather bitter gibe : "Louis Napoleon," said a member of the family, "deceived Europe twice—first when he succeeded in passing off as an idiot, and next when he succeeded in passing off as a statesman." We are not given the name of the imperial epigrammatist; many will be disposed to attribute it to the Emperor's candid cousin, Prince Jérôme Napoleon.

Mr. John Forster, the biographer of Dickens, met Louis Napoleon at dinner at Lady Blessington's. The Prince had recently escaped from Ham ; he had shaved off his moustache, and "his lower and least-pleasing features were completely exposed under the straggling stubble of hair beginning again to show itself."

To Mr. Sidney Whitman and others Prince Bismarck expressed the opinion that Napoleon III. was "overrated in intellect and underrated in heart."

It was reserved for the anonymous author of "An Englishman in Paris,"* whom some at first thought to

* London : Chapman and Hall.

have been the late Sir Richard Wallace, of Hertford House celebrity, to give a matchless word-portrait of Louis Napoleon before he became Prince-President—matchless for its bluntness and also for its Hogarthian detail. The Prince was staying at the Hôtel du Rhin, Place Vendôme, and, says the “Englishman” :

“ I must own I was disappointed. Though I had not the slightest ground for expecting to see a fine man, I did not expect to see so utterly an insignificant one, and badly dressed in the bargain. . . . And yet Lord Normanby, and a good many more, who have said that he looked every inch a King, were not altogether wrong. . . . Louis Napoleon’s legs seemed to have been an afterthought of his Creator ; they were too short for his body, and his head appeared constantly bent down to supervise their motion ; consequently their owner was always at a disadvantage when compelled to make use of them. But when standing still or on horseback there was an indescribable something about the man which at once commanded attention. . . . Louis Napoleon was leaning in his favourite attitude against the mantelpiece, smoking the scarcely ever absent cigarette, and pulling at the heavy brown moustache, the ends of which, in those days, were not waxed into points as they were later on. There was not the remotest likeness to any portrait of the Bonaparte family I had ever seen. He wore his thin lank hair much longer than he did afterwards. The most startling features were decidedly the aquiline nose and the eyes. The latter, of a grayish-blue, were comparatively small and somewhat almond-shaped, but, except at rare intervals, there was an impenetrable look, which made it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to read their owner’s thoughts by them. If they were the ‘ windows of his soul,’ their blinds were constantly down.”

When the “Englishman” looked into the Prince’s face, he “felt almost tempted to put him down as an

opium-eater. Ten minutes afterwards I felt convinced that, to use a metaphor, he himself was the drug, and that everyone with whom he came in contact was bound to yield to its influence." Cavaignac, Thiers, Lamartine, and Hugo, with others, "who wanted to make a cat's-paw of him, thought Louis Napoleon either an imbecile or a secret drunkard."

Louis Napoleon must have greatly changed in seven years, or "An Englishman in Paris" wrote under a complete misapprehension of the Prince's real character, for in 1855 Queen Victoria, in her remarkable "Memorandum," drawn up at Buckingham Palace, observes :

"It is therefore the more astounding, indeed almost incomprehensible, that he [the Emperor] should show all those powers of government, and all that wonderful tact in his conduct and manners which he evinces, and which many a King's son, nurtured in palaces and educated in the midst of affairs, never succeeds in attaining."*

"Le Petit Homme Rouge,"† the one English historian of the Imperial Court from 1852 till 1870 whose work is of value, portrays Louis Napoleon, at the age of forty-four, when Prince-President, as rather below middle height, with an almost colourless face and dark chestnut hair. "His almost black eyes seldom looked one in the face, and in later years were half closed and expressionless. He had physical vigour, and personal courage ; a dreamy, imaginative mind ; and a very amorous, sensual temperament," which some authorities assert was inherited from his

* "The Letters of Queen Victoria," vol. iii., p. 122. London : John Murray, 1908.

† "The Court of the Tuileries." By Le Petit Homme Rouge. Chatto and Windus, 1907.

mother. "His foster-sister, Mme. Cornu, said he had no moral sense whatever, but, by reason of his position, he exerted himself to keep his passions under control (in which he did not always succeed)." The moustache was originally "a medium brown, but in later years it was for a time darkened by a dye to conceal greyness." "He was not the savage brute suggested by Hugo in the 'Châtiments.'"

Music, or rather operatic music, evidently did not appeal to Napoleon III., for M. Ludovic Halévy, who died in May, 1908, records, in his diverting "Notes et Souvenirs," that the Emperor was seldom seen in his box at the Grand Opera, despite the remonstrances of his friends. "It is your theatre," they would say; "a Sovereign ought to show himself there; the Opera comes within the category of imperial functions." To this pressure the Emperor occasionally succumbed. Scarcely had he taken his seat than he fell into a sort of torpor. From time to time the Empress tapped him on the shoulder with her fan, whispering a few words to him. Then he glanced round the house, smiled vaguely at his consort, and relapsed into his dream.

An Englishman, known to me, who had an audience of the Emperor at the Tuileries, narrated this little incident in piquant fashion :

"Napoleon III., with that slow and awkward gait peculiar to him, enters the room, and approaches you, and, if you be a personal friend or foreigner of distinction, frankly extends his hand in recognition of your deep obeisance. If your business be political or purely social, His Majesty will probably consume countless cigarettes after having invited you to join him; but if the matter in hand be a commercial one, there will be no smoking, and nothing but receptive reserve on His Majesty's part. The last

words you hear form a kind reminder that you are expected at Compiègne. ‘We are to have private theatricals. Philippe de Massa gives us a comedy, or a *revue*, or something of that kind, and the Empress has asked Mme. de Metternich among others. C’est tout dire, n’est ce pas ?’” he adds with a smile.

The piece performed proved to be “*Les Commentaires de César*,” with the Prince Imperial in the part of a full-uniformed grenadier, and Princesse Pauline Metternich as a *vivandière* of the Turcos, with a song which had a great vogue :

“Je suis une guerrière,
Au cœur, au cœur joyeux ;
La vi, la vivandière
Des Turcos bleus.”

Napoleon III. was, it would seem, about the same height as his renowned uncle. Our “Englishman” thought the nephew utterly undistinguished in appearance—a remark which reminds one of what Peltier said of Bonaparte when, on January 4, 1798 (15 nivôse, an VI.), he attended a public meeting of the Institut National and was elected a member. Neither his figure, nor his features, nor his bearing, made him more noticeable than other men, yet “all eyes were upon him.” Mercier describes him as of average height, with a slight stoop, “rather delicately corpulent,” the hair of a dark chestnut, pressed down over the large forehead ; large brown eyes, bright and prominent ; an aquiline nose, the chin turning upwards, “like that of Apollo Belvedere,” pale complexion, sunken cheeks, the voice loud and mannered. His air was grave, serious as Cato’s, yet frank, with none of that austerity which characterized the head of Brutus. When, in Italy, his generals asked him how

he would occupy himself when peace sent them all home, Bonaparte said he should shut himself up and work, in the hope that some day he might be deemed worthy of membership of the Institut ! His nephew was equally a student. We know that his literary output during his six years' captivity at Ham was very considerable.

Mme. Cornu's letters* show in great detail the intellectual side of Louis Napoleon's life while he was at Ham. It was Louis Philippe, said Mme. Cornu, who made Louis Napoleon a man of letters, but during the sixth year of his imprisonment he exhibited signs of exhaustion. "He would have become stupid, perhaps mad, if his captivity had continued." He had not been very long at Ham before he had completed the "*Notes sur les Amorce Fulminantes et sur les Attelages. Par le Prince Napoléon Louis Bonaparte,*" and requested the commandant of the fortress to send a copy of the work to Marshal Soult. In the same year he wrote to ask his foster-sister's acceptance of another work which he had published ; this was "*Fragments Historiques, 1688 et 1830,*" the first edition of which was registered in the "*Bibliographie de la France*" in June, 1841. His letters to Mme. Cornu are full of allusions to "proofs," books and manuscripts which he required, and so on. They show his amazing intellectual activity throughout his long captivity.

In June, 1841, he confided to Mme. Cornu that he had a "great project" in his head—that was, to write a life of Charlemagne. "Will you," he wrote, "do me a great service : ask Professor Schlosser, of

* "*La Revue*" (Paris), November to December, 1909. By Seymour de Ricci.

Heidelberg, to give me a list of German books, or records, which are necessary for the writing of such a work ? I shall be grateful also for all the ideas which you yourself can give me on the subject."

Acknowledging a letter containing his foster-sister's New Year wishes (1843) and some *jolies petites choses*, the Prince wrote :

"Do not think you are dealing with an ingrat. I thoroughly appreciate you, and I love you *de toute votre valeur*—that is to say, 36 carats ! . . . I am in the way of making a great discovery, a new application of galvanism to industry. I am not sure if I shall succeed, but the mere hope that I shall amuses me. Yes, hope—that is the real divine flame which animates us all and changes unhappiness to joy, the desert into a fertile plain. I have never abandoned hope."

In 1842 Captain Jean Baptiste Brunet had published a work entitled "*Histoire Générale de l'Artillerie.*" Mme. Cornu, whom nothing escaped, sent her captive foster-brother a review of the book by one Major Renard ; and the Prince wrote (1845) :

"Major Renard's notice much pleased me, and gave me a high opinion of the capacity of its author. I should much like to have the inventory of the artillery at Ghent in 1390, and more especially the [financial] accounts of that town which are to be found in the historical archives of the fourteenth century, collected by M. Lenz and referred to by Major Renard. In my work I shall not be so lenient as Renard to Captain Brunet, who has written, not a history, but a romance. I am returning your box [of books], retaining only 'Naudé,' 'Guillaume de Tyr,' 'L'Instruction Historique,' and the 'Jouvencel.' As to the two large manuscripts which I return you, there has been a mistake, for in No. 7534 I do not find the 'Roman'

by Claris, nor anything resembling it, and in the 'Chroniques Martiniennes' there is nothing but a history of the Popes which is quite uninteresting, not even mentioning the Battle of Saint Jacques (1444) or the reign of Charles VII. M. Quicherat has made a mistake. I particularly want some information about this battle, of which M. Michelet speaks; but do not try to find the 'Roman' by Claris, for I have more interesting works to consult. Send me, if possible, the books for which I asked in my last letter. . . . M. Renard indicates some sources which I will ask you about later, as I do not want to overburden you with my requests. . . . I am now finishing my first volume, but I am in urgent need of some further details. Try especially to send me the two manuscripts which I mentioned in my last letter—Guido du Vigevano and Bartolomeo Carusi."

The above was written in January, 1845. In May, 1846, he sent Mme. Cornu some finally revised proofs of his new book, with the remark that a fatality surrounded his work. His eyes had been giving him much trouble, and this trouble—a dilation of the pupil, "*mais ce ne sera pas grand'chose, j'espère*"—had prevented him from writing anything for several days. "I have written to Dumaine to send you all the proofs *with the copy*, and not to send me any more direct. Please, for the next few days, send me only the second proofs, corrected."

That was his last letter from Ham. It was dated May 24. The next morning he escaped from the fortress, disguised in the blouse of the workman Badinguet, and on the 31st he addressed, from London, a letter to Mme. Cornu, beginning:

"You must have been astonished at the step which I took suddenly. In my opinion it was the best thing I could do to make an end of it. Luckily, everything

succeeded as I had desired. I hope to be able to rejoin my father at Florence immediately. But what particularly grieves me is that I have not finished my first volume. Here I can, of course, go on with it at the library with more ease than at Ham, but if I go to Florence I shall be much delayed. Besides, as I told you, I am still unable to see with one eye. Yesterday the oculist told me to put some leeches on it; that much worries me. I should therefore like Dumaine to publish, as a first part, all my 'copy' which he now has, and which completes the period of Louis XIV. I hope, my dear Hortense, despite the distance which separates us, and my departure, which perhaps did not enter into your head, you will continue to help me with my work, and continue the friendship which I so highly value. I really do not know where you can send me the third proofs, for here, I understand, nothing can come in a wrapper except at an enormous expense. I will inquire about this. As to the details of my journey, they have been given in the newspapers, and I do not think it would interest you to repeat them. I arranged everything so well that eight hours after leaving Ham I was in Belgium, and twelve hours later I was in England. It was like a dream. I have not had any news of good Conneau. He was more dead than alive the morning I left—not on his own account, but on mine. I hope they will not be too hard upon him. Send me some news about him. Before I left I arranged about the children,* and I left Aly to do as she liked with them until they are old enough to go to school. Bon [Philippe Le Bon,

* While he was in captivity at Ham the Prince became the father of three sons, for all of whom he provided. One, who was made Comte de Labenne, died in 1882; and another, Comte d'Orx, in February, 1910, at the age of sixty-eight. The mother was Alexandrine Vergeot, who had waited on the Prince at Ham. She is said to have ultimately married a M. Bure, who became Paymaster in the imperial household. The children bore the surname of Bure. No attempt was made to conceal their origin.—AUTHOR.

the Prince's former tutor] knows my intentions respecting them. Here people have been very good to me, and, generally speaking, say I was right [in escaping]. Let me know the effect my departure has had in Paris, and what people are saying."

Before the Prince escaped from Ham, Louis Philippe had abdicated and the Republic had been proclaimed. On June 30 the Prince wrote from London to Mme. Cornu referring to the terrible events in Paris :

"How I congratulate myself that I resigned ; had I not done so, I should undoubtedly have been made the pretext for this horrible battle. Despite that, however, I know that I have been calumniated, and that it has been said that I supported the *émeute*. But I am not much perturbed by reports which will be cleared up by facts. We live in terrible times, and wherever I look I see nothing but an early dissolution of society. Meantime my heart refuses to believe what my eyes see, and I still hope that France will emerge triumphantly from this *gâchis* of mud and blood."*

The features and pose of Louis Napoleon readily lent themselves to the art of the caricaturist. From the *Coup d'État* down to almost his last days, the satirists pursued him with their relentless pencils. It was said of the innumerable caricatures of the Emperor published in Germany in 1870-71 that there was nothing savage or ungenerous about them. Even the almanac of a hundred pages issued at the beginning of 1871 by *Kladderadatsch* was singularly moderate. The "baptism of fire" episode at Saarbrücken was made the most of, and furnished a text for the most bitter invective against the Emperor, Empress, and Prince

* "La Revue." By Seymour de Ricci.

Imperial. The boy, wearing a paper cocked hat, was held in the arms of a grinning Turco to see the burning town below (as a matter of fact, Saarbrücken never was burnt), the soldiers lying down and smoking, all enjoying it as if it was some spectacle. It was legitimate to make much fun of the Napoleonic boots (jack-boots, such as the Emperor certainly never wore in the campaign) and the cocked hat, which were shown tossing about on the waves of the Channel, the Emperor clinging to one boot, the Empress to the other, out of which "Lulu" furtively peeped. Then there was a picture of a menagerie; one compartment was inscribed "Leo-pard," the next "Bona-pard (Corsica)," behind which was Napoleon clutching the bars of the cage, while "Lulu" hopped about as a chained monkey. In another cage appeared the peacock (Spain), the Empress strutting with a magnificent tail, while outside was King William (not yet Kaiser) as the showman, whip in hand. The "Napoleonometer" showed the changes of the Emperor's countenance, marked on a graduated scale, as news of one defeat after the other reached him. The first "wire" had told of the "victory" at Saarbrücken on August 2; this evoked a smirk of satisfaction. After the news of the Battle of Weissenberg there was a twinge of doubt and uneasiness; after Wörth, a dragged, scared look; the fighting around Metz changed the Emperor's face into that of an old man—the moustache out of curl, the hair standing on end, the heavy jaws sunk. For Sedan there was a double-page picture, the Emperor being represented as a battered old Frenchman surrendering his sword to the King, Bismarck, and Moltke.

The German caricaturists had made Napoleon III.

a target for their barbed shafts all through the sixties, at a period when the democratic papers were reproaching Bismarck for treading in the Emperor's footsteps! In a caricature published by the *Frankfurter Latern* in 1863, Bismarck appeared as "The New Blücher." In a cavalry uniform he was riding on a Gallic cock, the saddle inscribed, "Eisen und Blut." Napoleon III. figured in the Munich *Punsch*, in 1863, in a classical subject; the Emperor as Clytemnestra, Bismarck as Egistha, preparing to give the *coup de grâce* to the Zollverein, which preceded the Confederation of 1867. Bismarck, pulling back the curtain, behind which was the figure of the victim on a couch, had in his left hand a sword. He was evidently "infirm of purpose," for Napoleon (a podgy, dwarfish figure), with one hand on the hilt of the sword and the other on Bismarck's shoulder, was urging him on with the sarcasm: "Joli coco, par ma foi! Et ça voudrait être mon ami! Reviens-y, et je te fi—— un coup de pied quelque part. Tu n'est point digne que l'on compromette pour toi sa mauvaise réputation." The artist had given Napoleon a huge hooked nose, and that organ did not decrease in size in the thousands of subsequent caricatures.

In another of the same journal's caricatures (1865), Bismarck, in the character of an old-clothes man, entered a room in which Napoleon III. was seated reading. Across the intruder's shoulders was a large bag, inscribed "North Schleswig" and "Rhein." "Have you anything to exchange?" he inquired; "do you want to buy anything?" "Thank you," replied the Emperor, "but I never buy stolen goods." "What do you mean by stolen? Did you bring into the world when you were born all the property you

now possess ? Yet you have some very nice things !” Napoleon : “ Come back when it’s dark !”

Between 1867 and 1870, it is remarkable that Bismarck very seldom, if ever, appeared in the Spanish, Italian, English, or American caricatures, while the face of Napoleon III. appeared everywhere, the nose, as usual, absurdly *bombé*. The Spanish artists represented him as a veritable Punchinello. The caricaturists had no grudge against Prussia ; the man they never left alone was the Emperor of the French. The leading German journal of caricature was then, as now, the Berlin *Kladderadatsch*, which Napoleon III. read regularly. This need not surprise us, for Queen Victoria found the Emperor “ as *unlike a Frenchman* as possible, being much more *German* than French in character ” (the italics are the Queen’s) ; while the “ Englishman in Paris ” said the Emperor’s “ English was that of an educated German who had taken great pains to get the right accent and pronunciation, without, however, completely succeeding, and when I heard him speak French I detected at once his constant struggle with the same difficulties.” The critic had evidently overlooked the fact that the Emperor had received his early education in Germany, at the Augsburg Gymnasium. While, however, the Emperor was deeply interested in, and probably amused by, *Kladderadatsch*, it did not please him to know that it was to be found at all the great cafés. The satirical journals of Italy and Spain—to mention no others—were rigorously stopped at the frontier ; yet the mordant *Kladderadatsch* seems to have been allowed to circulate freely.

The Emperor’s desire for a quiet life, which, however, he did not over-exert himself to secure, is

illustrated by an anecdote narrated by a personage who is described as "one of the famous 'Five.'"*

Whenever it was possible for him to snatch a respite from the official round at the Tuileries, the Emperor liked nothing better than to seek out his cousin, Prince Napoleon, in the Palais Royal, and chat over a cigarette. One afternoon the narrator of the incident happened to be with the Prince in his study, when two or three gentle taps were heard at a secret door which gave access to a long passage leading from the Palais Royal to the Tuileries.

"Come in," said the Prince; the door opened, the Emperor entered, and the Prince's visitor rose to take leave. The Emperor, however, begged him to remain, and he was naturally nothing loath. After the exchange of a few commonplaces, the Emperor, standing before the fire and lighting a cigarette, said to his cousin: "Tell me, Napoleon, does thy wife ever make scenes?"

The Prince, rather surprised at this question, looked at the Emperor for a moment, and then replied: "What scenes could she make?"

"Scenes of jealousy, for instance."

"No!"

"That's very strange," continued the Emperor, "for thou art a *mauvais sujet*, Napoleon; everybody knows that, and Clotilde cannot ignore it."

"It's true," said the Prince philosophically; "I am what you say, Sire, and doubtless my wife knows my habits. But why should Clotilde worry about it? Why should she reproach me? Was not Victor Emmanuel also *un coureur de guilledou*? She knows it. And as her husband, in this respect, resembles her father, she ought in justice to remember that it is always so with Kings."

* "Les Cinq" consisted of Émile Ollivier, Jules Favre, Henon, Darimon, and Picard, all in opposition at the time they were so styled.

The Emperor smiled.

"Thou art a singular moralist," he said, "and thou art a happy man. I wish I had a wife like yours. Life is impossible with Eugénie. I cannot receive a visit from a lady or glance at a petticoat without incurring the risk of a violent quarrel. The Empress's lamentations echo through the Tuileries." There was silence for a few seconds; then the Emperor continued: "Tell me, Napoleon, dost not thou know any way of preventing Eugénie from being so quarrelsome?"

The Prince reflected for a moment; then, with his wonted brusqueness, answered: "There is only one way, Sire."

"And that is——"

"To give your wife a good slapping the next time she makes a scene in your presence!"

The Emperor shook his head sadly, but for the moment took no other notice of his cousin's outspokenness, which he so much appreciated ordinarily. Then he murmured simply: "You do not mean that? If I only *threatened* Eugénie, she is capable of opening the window and shrieking 'Murder!'"*

Bismarck said all that was necessary for a Sovereign was a knowledge of foreign languages and how to ride—he need not bother about anything else. Napoleon III. was certainly a good linguist and first-rate in the saddle. He appears, however, on his own admission, to have been an indifferent Latinist. Entering the Prince Imperial's study one day, he found his son engrossed in a Latin exercise, poring over Noël's big Latin-French dictionary. "Ah," said he sympathetically to the perplexed boy, "these Latin translations are very troublesome—I could never do them myself." The shocked tutor, feeling that, in

* "L'Impératrice Eugénie." By Pierre de Lano. Paris: Victor Havard. 1894.

the interest of his pupil, for the credit of the Emperor, and for the reputation of the classics, it was necessary for him to say something, murmured respectfully : " Yet your Majesty has made an admirable translation of ' Cæsar's Commentaries.' " " It isn't mine," replied the Emperor, and retired, leaving M. Monnier to explain to the astonished Prince that this was one of his father's jokes, and that he really knew Latin as well as any, and probably better than most, of the professors at the Sorbonne.

CHAPTER VII

NAPOLÉON III. AT SEDAN AND AT WILHELMSHÖHE*

GERMAN papers vie with each other in recalling the anniversary of Sedan [September 1, 1870]. If every true French heart bleeds at the thought of that tragic day, no one has the right to banish these poignant souvenirs. The causes and results of this sombre drama have been so widely discussed that one hardly knows how to approach the subject, except by producing fresh evidence. It is this evidence, which is stamped upon my memory, having heard it with my own ears, or having collected it from letters written to my father [the late General Comte Fleury, who had been Ambassador of France at the Russian Court] the day after the catastrophe, that I will now bring forward.

I particularly remember General Vicomte Pajol narrating the tragic story in my father's study, Rue du Cirque. He stood in front of the equestrian portrait of Napoleon III. (by Alfred de Dreux), and

* These valuable human documents are from the brilliant pen of Comte Fleury, son of General Fleury, the devoted friend of Napoleon III., Ambassador to Russia in 1870, and thereafter a frequent visitor at Chislehurst. These interesting and intimate revelations are given here by the kind permission of M. Arthur Meyer, to whose influential and popular journal, the *Gaulois*, they were contributed by Comte Fleury in 1908,

I see his flashing eyes, his heavy moustache, and his energetic gestures—I see also those eyes wet with tears as he spoke of his Sovereign. General Pajol did not, so to speak, quit the Emperor during the whole of that 1st of September. He saw him remain for nearly five hours on his horse, despite the fearful suffering which caused him now and then to dismount and lean against a tree, without complaining, his clenched hand the sole indication that what he was enduring was almost beyond his strength to bear.

The Emperor arrived on the battle-field at the moment when Marshal MacMahon was taken away wounded. He stops to exchange a few words with MacMahon and General de Vassoigne, then continues his way to Bazeilles. The shells rain, for the group of officers surrounding the Sovereign had not failed to attract the enemy's attention. The Emperor does not wish to expose his staff uselessly. He makes the officers take shelter near the village of Balan, keeping by his side only General Pajol, Captain d'Hendecourt, Commandant Hepp, and Comte Davilliers. He advances under the crests of Moncelle. The rain of shells continues.

"The Emperor," General Pajol said, "remained immovable, as if waiting for one of the projectiles to hit him."

As the lines of marine infantry—the men who fought so heroically at Bazeilles—retired, the Emperor sent Captain d'Hendecourt to ask the reason. Scarcely had he gone on his mission than he was killed by a shell a few yards from the Emperor. On the heights of Givonne, General de Wimpffen joins the Emperor. He is full of hope and of illusions, and says (General Pajol remembers the exact words): "Your Majesty

must not be perturbed. In a couple of hours I shall have thrown them into the Meuse !”

The Emperor posts himself on the heights to the left of the Bois de la Garenne. There again the shells fall all round him. A shell drops near General de Courson, another near Captain de Trécesson, both officers forming part of the imperial staff. The horses rear, and two fall mortally wounded. The Emperor is covered with smoke and dust. Death passed by, passed incessantly, reserving its victim for a still longer agony. Listen to M. Jeannerod, the correspondent of the *Temps*: “The Emperor wanted to die ; the fact is now proved. Death passed as near to him as to Ney on the plateau of Mont Saint-Jean, when the bullets which he called obstinately spared him !”

When, about half-past eleven, the Emperor returned to Sedan in order to confer with the Marshal [Mac-Mahon], and with the intention to come back through the gate of Mézières, more than 30,000 disbanded soldiers filled the streets. The avalanche of projectiles kept increasing. A shell bursts close to the Emperor’s horse ; the Sovereign is covered with dust ; while all with him press anxiously forward, believing that he is killed. “Not a muscle of his face moved,” says M. Jeannerod. “All he did was to make a gesture to stop the acclamations with which he was still received.”

As to the second part of the battle, here are some curious details which I had from a letter written by General Faverot de Kerbrech. Baron Faverot, then a Captain, had been detailed for duty near the Emperor ; then he was made orderly-officer to General Ducrot. He was one of the combatants of that sombre

day, and saw a great deal. The long letter which he wrote to his former chief, General Fleury, on September 8, from Mougienne, on the road from Sedan to Pont-à-Mousson, is full of valuable information, and completes that which he himself published a few months before his death.

First he narrates how Ducrot, whom MacMahon nominated Commander-in-Chief, gave the order to retreat from the side of Illy—a movement which was carried out in good order; then how General de Wimpffen, who had arrived from Algeria, exhibited an official letter from the Minister giving *him* the command. Ducrot bowed before these superior orders, but he gave advice to General de Wimpffen, demonstrating to him that “all would be lost if we did not occupy Illy, that our line of retreat was cut, and that, finally, we should be hugged by the Prussians if we did not keep the Mézières road.”

De Wimpffen was of a different opinion, and he disregarded Ducrot's view of the situation. Towards eleven o'clock Ducrot again insists: “Let me make a desperate effort at the side of Illy.” Wimpffen consents. “It is then,” writes Captain Faverot, “that begins the splendid multiple rôle of General Ducrot. This man, at this supreme moment, was as admirable as Ney, as Murat. He sent me to all the cavalry generals to explain what he wanted them to do. Death was certain—success doubtful.”

Captain Faverot fulfils his mission. Then the artillery is brought up, and finally two divisions of infantry were to come to the support of General Douay, who was half smashed. “Then,” continues Faverot, “we returned to the plateau, where the shells fell so thickly that there was not an inch of ground

in the ravine which was untouched. There we placed our batteries. . . . At this moment the cavalry debouched, the Chasseurs d'Afrique leading. Ducrot, believing that the 4th Division was following him, places himself in front of the first regiment with General Margueritte, and heads the charge. The infantry weakened. With extraordinary efforts we take them with the bayonet, whilst the Chasseurs d'Afrique charge."

Captain Faverot was sent to General de Galliffet. "Galliffet was admirable. He led me to a ravine behind which were the Prussians; it was folly to attack them. I went back to tell the General so. The General returns with me, and shows Galliffet a point favourable to a charge. We put ourselves at the head of the first squadron, and Galliffet starts at a gallop. Nothing was finer than the sang-froid and the fine figure of Galliffet, elegant and tranquil in the midst of this deluge of shells and bullets. He and Ducrot had the honours of the day."

I ought to name many others. One cannot forget General Margueritte, fatally wounded at the head of his squadrons. "We are smashed, overwhelmed by the horror of what passes," writes Captain Faverot to my father; "but, General, I cannot tell you how proud I am of these two men, of having followed them during two hours, and of learning what intelligence and bravery can do. The cavalry was superb; their fate tells us so. Galliffet lost twenty-three officers out of thirty-eight; Bauffremont, twenty-five out of forty. The artillery was very fine. With a handful of general officers like Ducrot, with two brigades of infantry, we should have taken Illy, and France would have been saved. But, despite superhuman efforts,

the General was not completely followed. It was too late—the helter-skelter had begun. Ducrot himself returned sadly to Sedan, where all defence was useless, and where this mass of men, heaped up in a wash-hand basin, rendered all resistance absurd.”

That is why, a sortie having become impossible, the Emperor, reassuming for a moment the authority of which he had been despoiled, ordered the white flag to be hoisted. In April, 1872, the *Temps* avowed that it was impossible to avoid the surrender of the 60,000 men heaped up in the town. Replying to a vehement article in the *Siècle*, J. J. Weiss wrote in the *Paris-Journal* :

“In view of the scenes before his eyes the Emperor remembered that he was Emperor, and that he alone would be called to account for so many useless horrors if he let them continue another hour. He ordered, and the carnage ceased. That is what has been called the ‘mud of Sedan’! We shall have the honour to discuss this metaphor on the day when it is demonstrated that the ghastly phrase of the correspondent of the *Siècle*, ‘they marched over the wounded,’ was only a figure of rhetoric.”

In the course of a great political trial, shortly afterwards, the president of the court, Drouet d’Arcq, when summing up, said: “As to the white flag, it is certain that the initiative was taken by the Emperor; but it was a question of humanity—I will even say an act of charity—before which, to whatever party we may belong, we must bow.”

We know the story, so widely circulated, and illustrated by a talented artist, of the imaginary attitude of the Emperor on the battle-field and before the King of Prussia; the picture representing the Emperor, in a carriage with outriders, passing over the *débris*

of the French army, and smoking his eternal cigarette whilst riding over the wounded and the dead. General Pajol wrote a letter to the papers giving the simple facts, of which he had been an eyewitness. The letter, however, did not obtain sufficient circulation, and M. Thiers prevented greater publicity being given to it.

These two letters, written by the Emperor to the Empress on September 2, 1870 (the day after the battle of Sedan, and the day on which Napoleon III. surrendered to King William), are very little known.

The first is dated from the imperial headquarters, and runs :

“It is impossible for me to tell thee what I have suffered and still suffer. We made a march contrary to all principles and to common-sense. That was bound to lead to a catastrophe. It is complete. I should have preferred death to witnessing so disastrous a capitulation. However, in the circumstances, it was the only way of avoiding a butchery of 60,000 men.

“I think of thee, of our son, of our unhappy country. May God protect it! What is happening in Paris?”

In his second letter to his consort, written at Bouillon, the Emperor says :

“Imagine an army surrounding a fortified town, and being itself surrounded by very superior forces. After a few hours our troops wanted to return to Sedan. Then the town found itself full of a compact crowd, and upon this agglomeration of human heads the shells rained from all sides. . . . In this extremity the generals came to tell me that all resistance was impossible. There was no more ammunition—no more food. An attempt to make a gap was

unsuccessful. I remained on the battle-field four hours. The journey to-day through the midst of the Prussian troops was a real torment."

The Emperor started for Cassel. At Verviers he was in great danger, so excited were the people. The sang-froid of General Baron Chazal silenced the insulters. Hardly had Napoleon III. reached Wilhelmshöhe than he learnt of the revolution in Paris. He was still to live for two years ; but from September 1 he was stricken by death. "Conneau," said he, in a voice hardly intelligible, a few moments before breathing his last—"Conneau, you were at Sedan?" The wound had never closed!

The correspondence and the notes of my father, who, after his return from Russia, paid several visits to the Emperor Napoleon during his captivity, and the letters addressed to my father by one of his great friends who was attached to the person of the Sovereign captive, enable me to furnish some new details of the life led at Wilhelmshöhe by Napoleon III. and his household.

Of politics, in the strict sense of the word, there is here little or no question. We know, more or less completely, how the Emperor, after the Empress-Regent had been approached, was solicited by Prussia to negotiate directly in view of a treaty of peace which M. de Bismarck declared would be more favourable to France if it were signed by Napoleon III. instead of by the Government of National Defence, which was regarded by our adversaries as an irregular and provisional Government.

The Emperor has arrived at Wilhelmshöhe with Prince Joachim Murat, Lieutenant Prince Achille

Murat, the Generals Prince de La Moskowa, Comte Reille, Castelnau, de Waubert de Genlis, and Vicomte Pajol, his aides-de-camp ; Commandant Hepp and Captain de Lauriston, his orderly-officers ; Comte Davilliers, premier écuyer ; M. Raimbeaux, écuyer ; Drs. Conneau and Baron Corvisart ; and M. Franceschini Pietri.* All will share his captivity until the last moment.

Life at Wilhelmshöhe is uniform and monotonous. The great palace, with its innumerable windows close together and its colonnaded portico, is solemn and dismal. A large park, which a sheet of snow will cover from November, will serve for the daily walk of the captive Emperor and his companions. "The Emperor," wrote General — to General Fleury, "is the object of the most delicate hospitality. It is known that at Berlin someone takes care that nothing is wanting by him who is struck by so great a misfortune."

If, as Dante said and Musset repeated, "there is no greater misery than happy recollections in times of sorrow," the sojourn at Wilhelmshöhe will be particularly painful to the Emperor, for everywhere he will find souvenirs of his brilliant childhood. Although he was quite young at the time of the sojourn of Napoleon I. at the magnificent Court of King Jérôme [King of Westphalia] and Queen Catherine, Napoleon III. remembered it. Of those distant times he had talked with Prince Achille Murat during the mournful journey from the Belgian frontier to Cassel.

Vague as are those recollections, they are revived by

* Nearly all the personages here mentioned by Comte Fleury were familiar figures during the imperial family's residence at Chislehurst. One of the few survivors is M. Pietri, who is still with the Empress at Farnborough Hill.

certain objects left in the Château by the Prince of Hesse.

On the day after his arrival the Emperor had asked to be permitted to stroll through the Château, which he had only partly seen formerly. Broken in soul and body by the physical and moral tortures which he had endured, and which were increased by the news from Paris, he walked with bowed head, casting almost indifferent glances at the rooms which opened one after the other before his distracted gaze.

Suddenly, it not occurring to anybody to warn him, he found himself opposite a smiling portrait, resplendent with youth and grace, that a ray of light illuminated at the moment. It was his mother's portrait !

The Emperor took a step backwards, struck, as it were, *en pleine poitrine*. As those who accompanied him remained immovable and struck, the Emperor indicated, by a movement of his hand, that he wished to be alone. The aides-de-camp withdrew under the influence of inexpressible emotion. They waited for more than half an hour ere the Emperor called them in. What happened during that time, when, at the dawn of his captivity, the Sovereign crushed by Fate found himself unexpectedly before the portrait of Queen Hortense, for whom, as all know, he professed an almost idolatrous worship ? What scene of dramatic fiction can equal this *face-à-face* of the mother and son in an hour of anguish and almost hopelessness ? This portrait—it was the ray of hope illuminating the prison of vanquished Cæsar. The Emperor left this room enveloped by the image of Queen Hortense ; his forehead momentarily cloudless, almost serene ; his pale face lit up by half a smile.

How do the prisoners pass their day ? The details are given me in private letters, from which I extract the substance, omitting the political impressions.

The Emperor rises usually between seven and eight. When his toilette is finished he takes a cup of tea, and opens the window, no matter what the weather may be—and about Christmas time the glass was often more than 20° Réaumur.

An agitated multitude waited for his rising. The park sparrows, famished and half frozen, have soon found out that the palace, deserted for so many winters, has received a guest, and these feathered mendicants come every day to ask the charity which is distributed to them in the form of *petits pains* which the Emperor crumbles solicitously. Has he not always loved the humble ? They become so exigent, these birdlets, that sometimes they worry him when he is shaving ; these applicants, tapping with their beaks, have more than once made the razor slip in his hands. After shaving, the Emperor goes to his desk and writes without interruption until ten o'clock—private correspondence. From ten until eleven he reads the letters received and goes through the Belgian, English, and German newspapers. From their columns he endeavours to get an exact idea of what is passing in France ; but, to his great regret, he does not completely succeed. Very few French journals come to hand, and those irregularly.

At eleven o'clock comes lunch—very simple, and got through quickly ; during the meal the Emperor discusses with his officers the news brought by the post. Immediately afterwards all assemble in the next room. Commandant Hepp, an Alsatian by origin, translates to the generals the military news in the

German papers which the Emperor has marked with a red pencil. During the day, save for an hour and a half devoted to a walk in the park, with all the companions of his captivity, the Emperor remains alone in his room. He reads, or prepares his night's work.

At half-past five the Emperor dresses for dinner. He always comes down *en habit*, wearing the plâque of the Legion of Honour. All the members of his household appear in evening garb.

The dinner is simple and brief. A little light Moselle wine is drunk. Queen [afterwards the Empress] Augusta had chosen for the Emperor's domestics persons who were not Germans.

After dinner comes coffee, in the smoking-room, whilst the letters are being sent off by the last post. Often the Emperor retires at the end of a quarter of an hour ; sometimes he remains. To banish the painful thoughts of the day all take refuge in literature. One of the aides-de-camp reads scenes or passages from Corneille, Racine, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, or De Musset, and, abstractedly, the Emperor listens to the sonorous rhymes. Sometimes General Reille, a very fine reader, reads some romance or other. " ' Colomba ' interests us," writes General — to General Fleury ; " send us some books." And from Lausanne, where my father lives temporarily, he sends the volumes which are wanted. At nine o'clock, at latest, the Emperor rises, shakes hands with all, beginning with the Princes Murat, and retires slowly to his work-room. Once more he opens the window, if the weather is not too bad, to get a mouthful of fresh air. His eye pierces the horizon, whilst in the night the police and the soldiers go their rounds. As

for him, he watches. In these hours of solitude he can put his notes in order, and jot down the impressions of the day, which will serve him for a future work. He has marked out the lines for a brochure which will bear the name of the Marquis de Gricourt, "*Des Relations de la France avec l'Allemagne.*" He works at another essay upon "*L'Organisation Militaire de l'Allemagne du Nord.*"* As he has formerly done at Ham, the captive forces himself to give his actual thoughts a respite.

On New Year's Day the Emperor receives telegrams from *all* the Sovereigns of Europe, the German Princes excepted. But Comte de Mons, Governor of Cassel, comes, on behalf of the King of Prussia and his allies, to bring their wishes for "future good relations between the different nations of Germany and France." Queen Augusta had written a personal letter to the Emperor.

The Emperor was profoundly touched by an address, with 30,000 signatures, emanating from the French prisoners. The old faithful ones all recalled themselves to him; there were some abstentions, but very few. The Emperor was most touched by receiving two little bunches of faded violets, which, in some inexplicable manner, had been sent out of besieged Paris. On one of them was written, "*Un vrai Français*"; on the other, "*Une famille d'ouvriers reconnaissants*" (A grateful workman's family). The Emperor took those two bouquets to Chislehurst.

The Emperor received more visits than he expected—even more than he wished. Some officials requested

* Neither of these brochures seems to have been published. Perhaps they were never completed. But, anyway, the manuscripts must be at Farnborough Hill.

permission to come and see him. The Emperor replied that he did not want them to come, "wishing to preserve for France their knowledge and experience." Some former faithful ones journeyed to Wilhelmshöhe. After the fall of Metz the chiefs of the imprisoned army came to Cassel. "The interview was a painful one," wrote General ——. "Marshal Canrobert was very warmly received, and the Emperor embraced him several times."

The Emperor was very solicitous for the fate of the prisoners. Nearly all the money which he had possessed at Sedan had been distributed to the soldiers. He had very little of it left. He wrote to the Empress, who had arrived in England empty-handed: "I have not with me more than 200,000 francs (£8,000); but, like thee, I am proud to have fallen from the throne without having sent money abroad."

With the assistance of his old friend, Comte Arèse, the Palace of the Cæsars at Rome was sold to the Italian Government for nearly 1,000,000 francs (£40,000). The Emperor divided that sum into two equal parts—one for Chislehurst, the other for Wilhelmshöhe.* The Emperor's half did not last long. He wrote on February 22, 1871: "I have spent a great deal on the relief of the officers and soldiers, and when I see how much happiness I have conferred with such a little [money] I do not regret it." The Emperor's money was distributed very discreetly by M. Alfred Pommier, a French *industriel*, in business at Leipzig.

At the end of October, 1870, the Emperor was

* These figures appear to indicate the exact financial resources of the Emperor and the Empress shortly after the latter's arrival at Chislehurst in the autumn of 1870.

visited by the Empress Eugénie, who had travelled through Belgium unknown to the public. She arrived at Wilhelmshöhe accompanied by Comte Clary.

The latter presents himself to the Emperor.

"You here! I have just written to the Empress asking her if she cannot come now."

General — gives details of what followed :

"We were all standing round the Emperor. Clary replies : 'As soon as the Empress knows your Majesty's wishes she will certainly come.'"

Clary evidently wished to speak to the Emperor privately. When they were alone he told His Majesty that the Empress was at the gates of the Château. The Emperor could not conceal his emotion. "Let her come! Let her come!" And he rushed to the steps to wait for her. But he feared lest he should make an exhibition of himself ("Il craignait de se donner en spectacle"); and he knew how to restrain himself so as to receive the Empress as if they had parted from each other a few days previously in ordinary circumstances. . . . The Empress knows that the Emperor is master of himself; nevertheless, she is a little astonished, almost pained, at this apparent indifference, this coldness. . . . As soon as the door of the room is closed, the Emperor, weeping, throws himself into her arms. "Our interview was heart-rending," wrote the Empress next day to General Fleury.

The long calvary passes across the panorama. After the capitulation of Metz, which surprised *everybody*, one expressed ardent wishes for the Army of the Loire, and once more based hopes on Boubaki, whose march the Emperor and his companions followed "with

anxiety." News of Bourbaki came through his sister, Mme. Lebreton.*

With what resignation the Emperor received the news of the *déchéance* of the dynasty, pronounced at Bordeaux, those who witnessed it with inexpressible emotion can testify. He was to protest against it by his manifesto to the French people.

Then the preliminaries of peace, the conditions of which overwhelmed the Emperor. "In presence of such misfortunes," he wrote to the Empress, "my mind is entirely absorbed. If France were unanimous in her sentiments, if she had a Government strong enough to work without ceasing for a resurrection, one could have hope."

The captivity of the Emperor draws to a close. His departure, General — tells us, was fixed for March 20, a Sunday. The evening before General Reille assembled the *personnel* of the Château, and presented to each one a souvenir, either a piece of jewellery or money. The officers of the garrison, greatly moved, came to say farewell—such was the charm which the Emperor exercised upon all who approached him. One of them, Captain —, of the artillery, stationed at S., wept like a child. The French officers interned at Cassel came next. Their adieux were serious and sad. All bowed with greater respect than if they had been at the Tuileries. "Come, gentlemen," said the Emperor, "France will have need of you before long!"

Then came Comte Louis de Turenne and Baron Tristan Lambert, prisoners of war; and the two young Labédoyères, companions of the Prince Imperial, who, with their mother, the Princesse de

* Bourbaki's failure with the Army of the Loire was disastrous.

la Moskowa, were residing at the Hôtel Schombardt, Wilhelmshöhe.

The next morning the Emperor was up at six. At half-past seven he heard the last Mass of his captivity, and left to the priest of the neighbouring Catholic church the ornaments and the chalices which the Empress had sent from England.

At the moment the Emperor entered the train which was to take him to Belgium, on his way to rejoin the Empress in England, the journalist Melz, whose devotion to Napoleon III. was worthy of all praise, received a telegram, which he took to the railway-station. It contained these words: "Revolution in Paris. Two generals assassinated. Socialists masters of the capital. Question of peace postponed."

Having read the telegram the Emperor turned pale, and threw up his arms, saying: "The second time, face to face with the foreigner."

CHAPTER VIII

“HOW WE LOST SEDAN”

BY THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON III.*

IMMEDIATELY after the war of 1870 the English papers published various articles explaining, from the military point of view, how the disaster of Sedan became inevitable. It was supposed at the time that these articles had been inspired by Napoleon III., and that they were founded upon information supplied by His Majesty. This is uncertain, but there is in existence an imperial narrative of the disaster of Sedan, the authenticity of which cannot for a moment be called in question. The original is in the possession of Baron A. Chazal, son of the former Lieutenant-General of the Belgian Army. It forms a part of those documents relating to the events which occurred between 1848 and 1875, and constituting the *dossiers* left by General Chazal. It was that officer who escorted Napoleon III. from Sedan to Bouillon, and thence to Verviers, whence the Emperor departed for Wilhelmshöhe.

General Chazal, who had always maintained very cordial and close relations with the imperial family, made Napoleon III. understand that it was of the

* This remarkable narrative, written by Napoleon III., is reproduced by the courteous permission of the Editor of the *Temps*, in which it appeared exclusively in October, 1908.

utmost importance to explain events immediately, and to give clearly the details of the disaster. The narrative (he said) ought to be published in the *Times*, and it was hoped that such an explanation would bring about a change of public opinion in favour of the imperial cause.

Arrived at Verviers, Napoleon III. wrote the narrative now printed, and sent it immediately to General Chazal. It will be understood that every word was well weighed when it is stated that the manuscript is strewn with erasures and alterations. The manuscript covers seven pages and a quarter of close writing. At the back of the cover General Chazal had written : "Narrative of the Battle of Sedan, written at Verviers by the Emperor." Inside the *dossier* is a half-sheet of note-paper, with, in the left corner, the letter N, surmounted by a crown, with these words in General Chazal's handwriting : "Autograph de l'Empereur Napoléon III., written at Verviers." Below, like an address hastily jotted down, are the words : "Château de Wilhelmshöhe, près de Cassel."

The personality of General Chazal, and the part which he played by the side of the Emperor on the morrow of Sedan, guarantee the authenticity of the narrative. General Chazal's son has explained that, although it had been agreed with the Emperor that the story should be published, it was not printed because events had made useless a publication intended, in the opinion of the Emperor, to produce a current of opinion less hostile to the imperial family.

The narrative, the phraseology of which is occasionally somewhat crude, has been transcribed textually ; it betrays in every line the essential wish to safeguard the imperial prestige, as far as it could still be pre-

served, even at the risk of falsifying some of the actual facts.

Since the time when these yellow pages were written, impartial history has rectified certain points of the narrative. But it must not be forgotten, in now reading it for the first time, that it was written with the view of immediate publication, and with the essential preoccupation of justifying, as far as possible, the Emperor in public opinion, which it was still hoped to bring round to the imperial cause. Hence the passage particularly insisting upon the Emperor displaying sang-froid and exposing himself to danger. When the Emperor arrived at Verviers, he was much depressed, and it cost him a struggle to complete the narrative, which, with its repetitions and alterations, especially towards the end, betray his moral lassitude and *abandon*.

THE EMPEROR'S NARRATIVE.

It is difficult to relate so extraordinary an event as that which has just taken place under the walls of Sedan, where an army, supported by a citadel, has been obliged to surrender in ignorance of the circumstances which brought about its defeat. We will endeavour to explain it to our readers.

After the Battle of Mars-la-Tour, Marshal Bazaine, although he remained master of the field, was obliged to fall back upon Metz for the purpose of procuring food and munitions of war ; but the Prussian Army, reinforced by numerous troops, again confronted him, and, after much fighting, glorious for the French Army, threatened to cut off his retreat. Marshal de MacMahon, whose army had been formed at Châlons, resolved then to go to the succour of Marshal Bazaine,

and, although he felt he was taking a bold step, in presence of the considerable forces which were marching on Paris, under the command of the Crown Prince, and which might take him in flank, while those troops who were before Metz might, to a great extent, oppose his front, he determined to go to the assistance of the Army of Metz. He accordingly marched from Rheims to Rethel, and from Rethel to Stenay. Arrived at Chêne-le-Populeux, he learnt that the Crown Prince's advance guard had been seen, and that already the heads of his columns were engaging the corps of Douay and Faily. Immediately he ordered a retreat towards Mézières, for, were he cut off from that town, he would not be able to revictual his army. The movement had already commenced, when a telegram from Paris, received during the night, compelled him to persevere in a march which was to prove fatal to him.

The French Army continued to advance. Already a part of it had passed the Meuse, at Mouzon, when the corps of Generals Faily and Douay, which had remained alone on the left bank, were severely attacked and retired in disorder, after having resisted for a considerable time.

Marshal de MacMahon then recognized, for the second time, the extreme difficulty of reaching Metz, and felt the necessity of abandoning his plan. He immediately gave the order to make a retrograde movement towards Sedan, and the troops, although worn out by fatigue, marched for a part of the night of August 30-31.

Upon arriving near Sedan, the 12th Corps had to take part in an engagement where all the advantage was on its side. But during this time the Prussian

Army had completed its passage of the Meuse, both above and below Sedan, and commenced to occupy all the heights which commanded the town. It is not uninteresting to remark here that Sedan is a fortified place, commanded by hills, and incapable of resisting the new artillery. The approaches are not defended by works and advanced forts, as at Metz and many other places. [This last sentence is inserted between the lines, and is in General Chazal's writing.] On another side the armament was very incomplete, and the provisions and the munitions of war were very restricted.

On the following day, September 1, the French Army was simultaneously attacked on the right and on the left. The right of the position was occupied by Ducrot's and Lebrun's corps, the left by Wimpffen's and Douay's corps. Marshal de MacMahon immediately mounted his horse and proceeded to the most advanced fronts of the attack to examine the positions. The Emperor, whom the Marshal had informed of his intention, was also on horseback, and was leaving the town, when he met the Marshal, who was in an ambulance waggon, having been wounded in the left thigh by a shell.

The command had been assumed by General Wimpffen, as the senior general. The engagement continued energetically for several hours ; but towards two o'clock in the afternoon the troops were repulsed and made their way into the town, where the streets were already blocked by carts, artillery carriages, infantry, and cavalry, all in the greatest confusion. The Emperor, proceeding to the battle-field, went first towards General Lebrun's corps, at Salon, where the fighting was very severe, and from

there he rode on towards the centre, encouraging the troops by his presence, and showing the greatest sangfroid in the midst of the projectiles which fell around him. After remaining four hours on the battle-field, and visiting those points where the danger was greatest, he returned to the town and proceeded to where Marshal de MacMahon was lying. Wishing to depart again immediately, he could not pass through the streets, so encumbered were they, and he was obliged to remain in the town, where shells were falling and causing several fires, striking the wounded in private houses, and scattering death in the streets by bursting upon great masses of men heaped one upon the other. At this moment General Guyot de Lespars was killed in the street by a shell.

The Emperor, obliged to remain in the town, installed himself at the Sous-Préfecture, which was the centre of this rain of iron. Several shells had burst upon the roof and in the courtyard of this residence, where presently arrived the commandants of the different corps, announcing that resistance had become impossible. Their men, after having courageously fought almost all day, attacked on all sides, had bent their steps towards the town, and were jammed against each other in the streets and the ditches of the citadel. Soon the confusion was general, and all movement became impossible. The Prussian shells fell amongst this sea of humanity, dealing death at every *coup*, and the ramparts of the town, far from serving to shelter our army, became the cause of its loss.

Recognizing, then, the impossibility of a useful resistance, it was necessary to *parlementer*, and a white flag was hoisted on the summit of the fortress at five o'clock

in the afternoon. At this moment, the Prussian Army, more than 240,000 strong, had tightened its grip ; a formidable force of artillery occupied all the heights which commanded the town, and the infantry had been able to advance as far as to the glacis of the citadel.

The King of Prussia then sent an aide-de-camp to the Emperor to demand the surrender of the citadel and the capitulation of the army. The Emperor would not answer for the army, leaving that to General Wimpffen, who had been in supreme command ; but he made known to the King that he would personally surrender to him. The King requested that plenipotentiaries should be nominated for the purpose of knowing the propositions respecting the army. General Wimpffen had a conference with General de Moltke, and on his return laid before a council of war composed of all the generals of the army the conditions made to him. At this council it was unanimously agreed that the army, being without provisions, without munitions of war, heaped together in the streets of the town, already in disorder, could not possibly make any movement, and could no longer hope to cut a passage by main force through the enemy's ranks. Consequently it became impossible to prolong a resistance which could only result in the massacre of the troops, and everybody was compelled to accept the capitulation.

General Wimpffen came to acquaint the Emperor with the result of this deliberation, and told him that he alone could obtain better conditions for the army. Indeed, the King had offered to have an interview with the Emperor, which took place about one o'clock in a château near Sedan. Although it had been said

that, if the conditions were not accepted by nine o'clock, hostilities would be resumed, the interview was delayed until the conditions had been accepted by General Wimpffen.

Such is the exact account of this catastrophe, which filled every soldier's heart with sorrow.

NAPOLÉON.

CHAPTER IX

THE TREATY WHICH VANISHED FROM CHISLEHURST

ONE result of the Empress Eugénie's visit to the Emperor of Austria in 1906 was to produce in the Italian and French Press a number of articles, letters, and interviews, seeking to explain why France entered single-handed into the war with Prussia. Count Constantin Nigra, better known as the Chevalier Nigra, a former Ambassador of Italy at Vienna, who died in 1907, was credited with the authorship of an article in the *Tribuna* narrating the history of the *pourparlers* between Austria, Italy, and France, prior to 1870, having for their object a triple alliance against Prussia ; and asserting that the reason of the Empress's journey to Ischl was to be found in her desire to restore to the Emperor of Austria an autograph letter sent by His Majesty to Napoleon III., making it clear to the latter that such an alliance was possible only on condition that the Emperor of the French agreed to an Italian occupation of Rome.

In the discussion that ensued, the Marquis Visconti-Venosta (who, at the end of 1869, was Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs) pointed out the interesting circumstance that, several years ago, Signor Nigra (who it will be remembered was Italian Ambassador to France previous to the *déchéance*) stated that the proposed alliance against Prussia really

came to nought because the Emperor Alexander II. let it be known that if such a compact were entered into he would ally himself to Prussia. The Marquis further expressed his opinion that the Empress Eugénie would not have waited thirty-six years in order to return to the Emperor Francis Joseph a letter which contained nothing whatsoever of a compromising character.

As might have been expected, the discussion of so vital a question as the proposed alliance, which would have been of incalculable service to France in 1870, brought from his retirement the veteran Émile Ollivier, the Prime Minister who swayed the destinies of France until shortly before the flight of the Empress and the proclamation of the Republic. M. Ollivier declared in the *Matin* that, if they had to live those times over again, he would act as he had acted previous to the events of 1870.

“The invasion, the defeat, the dismemberment of France,” said the *Petite République*, “left M. Ollivier indifferent. To him the important fact was that Napoleon III. kept his word as a gentleman! To the expression of these enormities M. Ollivier added that, but for the events of September 4, those ‘gentlemen,’ the King of Italy and the Emperor of Austria, would have opposed the taking of our two provinces [Alsace and Lorraine]. The conclusion, therefore, was that it was the fault of the Republic. This man knew all that in 1870. He was not ignorant of the fact that we should have had the support of half Europe; that we did not have it because the Pope was the ‘godfather of the Little One’ [the Prince Imperial]. And it was with a light heart that they launched us into war. The others will, perhaps, say that they did not know these things, but now that M. Ollivier has told us for what puerile reasons he

deprived us of powerful allies, we may ask how certain of his colleagues [of the Academy]—MM. François Coppée, Jules Lemaitre, and Maurice Barrès, who pass their time weeping over the lost provinces, also with a light heart—will be able to continue their relations with this *malheureux*."

The celebrated publicist, M. Ranc, who for thirty years, until his death in August, 1906, had been a prominent figure in French politics and journalism, wrote in a similar strain in the *Aurore* :

"Many years have elapsed since the revelations of Prince Napoleon [Jérôme] made everything known. If in 1870 France had no allies, if she remained isolated, it is because the Imperial Government would not abandon the Temporal Power, because the Emperor was so headstrong as to maintain the occupation of Rome. It was the influence of the Catholic party—of 'the Empress's party'—which carried him away; that party which said, 'Better the Prussians at Montmartre than the Piedmontese at Rome!' The Prussians came to Montmartre, and the Piedmontese are always at Rome. Such are the splendid results of the imbecile policy of him who, on August 3, 1870, telegraphed to the Empress: 'Despite the insistence of Napoleon [Prince Jérôme], I will not give way about Rome.' The Emperor wrote that after an interview with Count Vimercati, who had just offered him the Austrian-Italian alliance. These last incidents—the visit of the Empress Eugénie to Francis Joseph, M. Nigra's article in the *Tribuna*, the publication by M. Émile Ollivier of the letter of Victor Emmanuel—have taught us nothing. We have only found in them the confirmation of these terrible words of Prince Napoleon: 'The friendship of the Vatican, the defence of the Temporal Power, cost us Alsace and Lorraine.'"

Comte Soderini, formerly a member of the Pope's "Noble Guard," and credited with an intimate know-

ledge of the diplomatic events of 1869-70, gave a categorical denial to the story of the "imaginary letter" said to have been "restored" in 1906 by the Empress Eugénie to the Emperor Francis Joseph. He does not believe in the existence of a letter which had no *raison d'être*. Anyway, he puts the Empress outside the discussion. "If the alliance was not entered into, I do not believe that it depended upon the Emperor of Austria's letter or upon the Empress Eugénie's alleged hostility to Italy. Prince Jérôme's accusations in this particular are not supported by any positive proofs."

Prince Jérôme Napoleon's story of these diplomatic negotiations is of exceptional interest, and is confirmed by what the Comte de La Chapelle had previously published on the same subject. Prince Jérôme* visited Napoleon III. at Chislehurst on December 12, 1872, less than a month before His Majesty's death. The Emperor, although suffering greatly, spoke to his cousin concerning the steps which the latter had taken in August, 1870, in order to induce Italy and Austria to lend France their armed support.

"'The Emperor,' said Prince Jérôme to M. Darimon in 1875, 'opened a drawer of his bureau, and showed me the *projets de traités* which had been negotiated with Austria and Italy. I knew the *projet de traité* with Italy, as I had a copy of it, which was sent to me when I was leaving France for Austria in August, 1870. The *projet* with Austria contained corrections made by the Emperor Francis Joseph, and with it was an autograph letter which left no doubt

* Father of Prince Napoleon, the Pretender, whose interview at Buckingham Palace with King Manoel in November, 1909, was an event of historical interest and importance.

as to the good intentions of M. de Beust's Cabinet towards France. After the death of the Emperor his papers were arranged. They were in the greatest disorder, and it was easy to see that they had been turned over by a strange hand.

'The Emperor told me that in a drawer which he indicated the *projet de traité* with Italy had been found, but it was impossible to discover that which had been drawn up with Austria. . . . 'Probably,' said the Empress, 'while the Emperor was a prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe, the Prussians entered his cabinet and took the documents.' 'You are mistaken,' I said to the Empress; 'that paper was not stolen at Wilhelmshöhe. The Emperor brought it to Chislehurst; the proof of which is that last December [1872] he communicated its contents to me, and I noted them. Of that I am absolutely certain.'

'Ah, mon Dieu!' exclaimed the Empress, 'you have opened my eyes, and now I understand the object of a visit which I received some months ago. Princess Metternich* came to see me. She said: 'They want you to be very careful as to what you publish about the relations which existed between the Austrian and French Governments.' I took no notice of what she said; but I now see that it was to the interest of the Austrian Government that these papers, which were more or less compromising, should disappear. Evidently the paper was stolen.'

'I learnt,' continued Prince Jérôme, 'that one of the Emperor's domestics had disappeared with some 17,000 francs. The theft of money has evidently served to cover the abstraction of important papers. M. Thiers kept at Chislehurst a number of spies. It was known that some of these were in the Emperor's service. It is probable that the Government of M. Thiers, warned by the Austrian Government of the existence in the Emperor Napoleon's cabinet of papers which might cause Prussia to be disagreeable, secured

* Wife of the Austrian Ambassador to France under the Empire.

their removal by a faithless servant. That would have been all the more easy to accomplish because of the great carelessness of Napoleon III.

‘When the Emperor went out, he placed the key of his bureau under the clock, and when his back was turned it was easy for the first-comer to rummage the drawers. M. Thiers was the more disposed, under the circumstances, to come to the aid of the Austrian Government, as the *projet de traité* proved that at the beginning of the war we were not without alliances, as he constantly reminded the Chamber and others ; and that, once the document in question had disappeared, he could, with impunity and without fear of contradiction, accuse the Emperor of stupidity and lack of foresight.’ ”

It is not a little curious that, after the lapse of thirty-four years, this question of *projets de traités* between Austria, Italy, and France, should have cropped up in 1906. Still more odd is it that all this diplomatic pother should have had its origin in the friendly visit of the widow of the last of the Bonapartist Emperors to the venerable Kaiser Francis Joseph.

When the Emperor died, Prince Jérôme Napoleon (whom Sainte-Beuve thought “a really great man, although, unfortunately, a Prince !”) was invited by the Empress to Chislehurst to discuss his late cousin’s affairs. The room in which Her Majesty received him was so dark that he could hardly see her. “Will you go into the Emperor’s study and make an inventory of his papers ?” Somewhat surprised at this request being made at such a moment, the Prince (so says M. Darimon) nevertheless acceded to it. He observed that everything sealable was already sealed—not by the Emperor’s solicitors, but by M. Pietri. The latter broke the seals one after another, but nothing of im-

portance was found. Presently they came to the drawer in which Prince Jérôme had seen the Emperor place the treaty with Austria which had vanished as narrated above. "It is useless to continue the search," said the Prince. "I see what there is. I can do nothing more;" and before leaving Camden Place he told the Empress that he must decline to have anything to do with the conduct of the Prince Imperial's affairs. Self-preservation is still the first law of Nature; and, for my own protection, I reassert that this story of the vanished treaty rests entirely upon what Prince Jérôme is alleged to have said to M. Alfred Darimon* in the early part of 1873 after his visit to the widowed Empress at Chislehurst.

* "Notes pour servir à l'histoire de la guerre de 1870." By Alfred Darimon. Paris: Paul Ollendorff.

CHAPTER X

MEMORIES OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL

ON June 16, 1871, some three months subsequent to the arrival of the Emperor Napoleon III. in England, I witnessed, at Berlin, the "Einzug"—the triumphal entry of the Emperor William I., the German Princes, Bismarck, Moltke, and the other generals, and many thousands of troops. I had seen the *lever de rideau* at Saarbrücken (it was called "The Prince Imperial's Baptism of Fire"), and, thanks to the then editor of the *Morning Post*, the late Lord Glenesk, I was present at the fall of the curtain ten months later.

In his retreat at Chislehurst Napoleon III. read the details of the great military spectacle at Berlin, as some time before he had read, with moist eyes, the story of the conquerors' "march in" to Paris. They "occupied" the Champs Élysées and Place de la Concorde two days and two nights. On the morning of the third day they marched out, through the Arc de Triomphe, "and then," wrote Russell, of the *Times*, "for the first time in the campaign I saw the Germans indulge in military glorification." They were going home, leaving Paris, as Bismarck, anticipating Vernon Harcourt, said, "to stew in her own gravy."

The Empress had telegraphed an appeal to the

venerable Kaiser to spare Paris this last humiliation of a "march in." He could not listen to such a petition unmoved, but he could only answer "No!"

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children enrolled the Prince Imperial as one of its prominent supporters, and it was hoped that he would attend the annual dinner in support of its funds in June, 1872. He was unable to be present, but he sent a donation and an expression of his admiration of the society's useful work.

There was a state ball at Buckingham Palace on the 28th of the same month (the anniversary of Queen Victoria's coronation). The Princess of Wales went to Chislehurst for the purpose of inviting the Emperor and Empress to the entertainment. Their Majesties could not be induced to accept the Queen's gracious invitation; they, however, sanctioned the attendance of the Prince Imperial, who, then a little over sixteen, made his *début* at the English Court. A royal carriage took him to and from the palace.

A few days later the Prince, attended by Comte Clary and M. Augustin Filon (who in 1909 was writing articles in English journals), was present at the opening of a new school for Catholic children at Kingston. At St. Mary's Church he was received by Canon Oakeley, and Archbishop Manning officiated. The children presented an address to the eminent prelate, who replied: "Do not thank me; it is my duty to be here. Rather thank the Prince Imperial, whose presence among us is an act of charity, and who has desired to associate himself with the poorest of his brothers in Jesus Christ." In the streets and at the school the Prince was tumultuously cheered. The Duke of Norfolk, Lord Gainsborough, Mr. Scott-

Murray, and other leading Catholics made the acquaintance of the Prince, who upon leaving was greeted "with that enthusiasm which," wrote one of the chroniclers of the event, "his name never fails to inspire, joined to that special sympathy which he evokes in the minds of English people."

In the succeeding week the Prince was present at a Protestant ceremony at Farningham, the laying of the foundation-stone of a school for children. Comte Clary, M. Filon, and M. Louis Conneau accompanied him. After prizes had been presented by the Prince to the children there was a lunch under canvas. The Prince was placed near the Bishop of Rochester, Lord Frederick Cavendish (the Fenians' victim in Phoenix Park), Mr. Illingworth, M.P., and Mr. Hanbury, the founder of the new school. Lord Frederick, in proposing the Prince's health, commented on "the affection of the English public for his illustrious father." Cheers were given for the Emperor, for the Empress, and for the Prince, and a solitary voice called for "Three more for the Republic!" The proposition was received with general derision, and its author abruptly left the marquee.

The Prince replied in English ; it was one of the very few speeches which he ever made. He expressed his sympathy with the preceding toasts, more especially with that relating to the Prince of Wales, and told, in apt phraseology, how the fears and hopes of England for her much-loved Prince had been deeply felt at Chislehurst.

More than once, in the speeches which followed, the Emperor's name was appreciatively mentioned in association with that of Cobden ; and of course the value of the commercial treaties was duly emphasized.



H.I.H. THE LATE PRINCE IMPERIAL.

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The Prince attended one of the annual dinners of the Newspaper Press Fund, and spoke. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., who was present, has recently described the scene as "a Bonapartist demonstration." Cardinal Manning was among the guests.

Even when the central figure had vanished, life at "Camden" was by no means stagnant, uninteresting, or uneventful. The Prince Imperial, who since his father's death had become "Napoléon IV.," was still a Woolwich cadet, with liberty to spend the week-ends at home, where there was frequent quiet entertaining of relations and friends. The Empress was not seen much about.

There was, for the second time, in 1873, pleasant preparation for the observance of the 15th of August fête. The Empress had as guests M. Rouher, the late Duc d'Albe (Her Majesty's nephew) and his wife, the Duc de Cabassera, General Ney, and other leading Bonapartists. The Duc de Bassano was still a faithful resident adherent, and for the Fête of the Assumption his son, the Marquis, who later succeeded to the dukedom, and died in 1906, came to Chislehurst. On the morning of the fête the Empress and the Prince were present at Mass at St. Mary's, attended by Mme. Lebreton-Bourbaki, Mlle. de Larminat, Comte Clary, and Dr. Baron Corvisart. The church was filled by 200 ticket-holders. All present wore or carried violets surmounted by the imperial eagle.

The Prince Imperial was addressed from the pulpit by Father Goddard, who brought his eloquent sermon to a close with these encouraging admonitory words :

"Louis Napoleon ! son of the noble lady who has shown us how to bear with dignity the hardest trials and the most cruel sorrows, you can never forget that

great souls are matured in the school of adversity. You, Monseigneur, have already developed qualities that prove you worthy of your father and mother. Therefore persevere, and God will reward your services and your virtue. ‘*Prospera, procede, et regna!*’”

Six hundred French men and women, amongst them a deputation of twenty artisans, representing thousands of their class, had crossed the Channel to testify their loyalty to the Empress and her son. Standing in front of the house, the imperial lady received their homage; the Prince shook hands with all and addressed them :

“I thank you, in my own name and in that of the Empress, because you have come to unite your prayers with ours, and because you have not forgotten the way by which you have already sought us. I also thank the faithful friends at a distance, who have sent us so many tokens of their attachment and devotion. As regards myself, who am a fugitive, and stand near to the tomb of the Emperor, I affirm that I represent the principles and the teaching respecting the government of the people which he has bequeathed to me in writing, and which, moreover, as the very foundation of the dynasty, can be condensed into the motto to which I shall always adhere—‘*Govern for the people and by the people.*’”

The Prince came of age on his eighteenth birthday, March 16, 1874. Naturally, the Bonapartists took advantage of this event to demonstrate at Chislehurst “in their thousands.”

On the Friday and Saturday before the fête, the Empress and the Prince received a number of their friends—the Duc de Bassano, the Marquis de Lavalette, the too-famous Comte Nieuwerkerke, the Duc

de Gramont, the Duc de Padoue, the Comte and Comtesse de Casabianca, M. Pietri (the former Prefect of Police), and some three hundred others, M. Rouher, of course, amongst them.

The great day began by the celebration of Mass at St. Mary's. A few days previously the Queen had sent to the Empress the Emperor's banner of the Order of the Garter, which, since 1855, had hung over His Majesty's stall in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. This relic now occupied the place of honour in the mortuary chapel. There had also been attached to the side of the Emperor's red granite tomb a brass plate, with the engraved inscription: "This sarcophagus was offered to the Empress Eugénie, as a mark of affectionate sympathy, by Vic. R. 1873." Had St. Mary's been of the dimensions of Westminster Abbey, it would not have held a tithe of the thousands of demonstrators. As it was, only a mere handful could be admitted. On the stroke of eleven, those privileged persons who had found places in the little church heard shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" and "Vive l'Impératrice!" The imperial lady entered on the arm of her son, followed by Prince Louis Lucien and Prince Charles Bonaparte, the Princes Lucien and Louis Murat; M. Rouher, his wife and daughter; the Ducs de Padoue, de Gramont, de Bassano, de Cambacérès, and de Montmorency; Prince de Wagram, the Duchesse de Malakoff, the Marquise de Lavalette, the Marquis and Marquise de Bassano, Mme. la Maréchale Canrobert, Comtesse Fleury, the Abbé Frechin, Mlle. Pajot, Comte Arjuzin, Comte Nieuwerkerke, Comte d'Aguado, Comte de La Chapelle, Marquis de Lagune, M. Delessert, M. Grandperret, M. Pinard, M. Paul de Cassagnac, M. Pietri, Comte and Comtesse

Clary, the two doctors (Corvisart and Conneau), and M. Augustin Filon. The Comtesse de la Poëze, a stately and handsome dame, in attendance on the Empress, was much remarked.

I saw a list of fifty-six out of sixty-five former Bonapartist Préfets (the nine others being dead), of thirty-eight Sous-Préfets, and of forty-five ex-deputies. In the throng were members of the National Assembly (Comte Murat, M. Abbaticci, and many others), senators (including some whose names are given above; and also Baron de Richemont), and very many officers. They pointed out to me (for I was a chronicler of the event for the *Morning Post*) the oldest saleswoman in the Paris central markets, who had been the first to kiss the Prince Imperial at his baptism—so M. Delessert assured me—as the representative of the wives, mothers, and daughters of the *ouvriers*.

Father Goddard, who during Mass had worn the gold chasuble presented to him by the Empress, presently doffed that gorgeous vestment, and, in white surplice and biretta, entered the pulpit. His eloquent address is, I regret, too long to be given here in full, but appended are some of the more vibrating passages of an extraordinary discourse, which was listened to in the deepest silence, save that at one point the congregation could not refrain from bursting into applause!

“The illustrious one who there reposes,” said the priest, pointing to the imperial sarcophagus, “on the promises of his faith—had he, then, exhausted the term of man’s life? Was all, to him, withered? Was all spent? Or what was the cause of a catastrophe as unexpected as it was lamentable? Ah!

without doubt it lay in grievous cares and labours that would have checked the nature of ordinary men ; than in unheard-of misfortunes ; and, above all, ingratitude and the enmities conceived by the most tragic hate. For, if the Emperor has fallen, he fell, not by the act of France, but by the act of the foes of the human race, who dared to undertake the most ill-judged revolt ever known, a revolt in front of a victorious enemy." (It was at this point that the feelings of all present overcame them.) "And yet that noble victim of the direst crimes here below—that heroic soul, always at peace with itself—was always good, always benevolent, covering with his protection and his favours all that was weak and suffering. Never did that noble nature, in the burning heat even of his most bitter reminiscences, give itself up to the temptation of confounding even its most culpable foes. I know that I am dealing with no novelty to anybody in this august assembly. No secular occupation has been dearer to your patriotism than the study of the magnificent story which tells to the remotest ages how, during long and happy years, Napoleon III. gave to France power and glory. And even now before us light begins to shine again, and history, which has begun somewhat tardily to judge, yet now judging with justice, places the Emperor in the front rank of the greatest and noblest of men. The Emperor has left a son—a Prince born on the footpace of the most illustrious of thrones, with his birthright more enviable than that of all other crowned Sovereigns. Then, one day, by a thunderbolt, it pleased Him who governs worlds to submit the Prince to the anguish of the most terrible troubles. But nothing is lost without a way of recovering it. To render himself stronger than the ruins of adversity and meet the discouragement of exile, this Prince, studying at the chair of Mars of our epoch, remembered that he is eighteen years old, and he ran to renew with Heaven, at the feet of those holy altars, this touching engagement of his own self-sacrifice and

of his glorious destinies. Madame, proved like gold in the fire, let nothing abate either your energy or your patience, and you will leave your martyrdom more glorious than ever. The work to which you have devoted yourself is now accomplished. Your sublime example and your wise counsels bear their fruit. Deign once more to unite your prayers with ours, and pray Our Lord to favour with His grace our best aspirations!"

Perhaps in its translated form (it was delivered in most eloquent, stately French) Father Goddard's discourse may strike the severe critic as, in parts, verging upon the grandiloquent. Its effect upon the listeners was indescribable. Even the men could not always, nor did they attempt to, conceal their emotion. They loved their Emperor, and they would have scouted the idea that, in his fervent eulogy of the virtues of the dead, the preacher had, in any one of his glowing sentences, forced the note.

While Mass was being sung, thousands of French people had been assembling on the common, brought by several special trains from London; and the Empress and her son drove back to Camden Place amidst every conceivable demonstration of respectful admiration. We contrasted the festal appearance of the grounds and house with their lugubrious aspect of days not very remote; for only some fourteen months had elapsed since the Emperor's funeral.

The guests had no reason to complain of a lack of hospitality. Far from it. They were regaled in marquees, the largest accommodating 3,000 people. The storm of 1870 had swept away an Empire and had made gaps in the ranks of Bonapartist society, but there was still in 1874 a Napoleonic *haut monde*,

as, indeed, there is in 1910. Most of those who had been conspicuous at the Court of the Tuileries, at St. Cloud, and at Compiègne were to be seen at this *fête impériale*, the first and only gathering of its kind ever witnessed in England.

In the principal marquee, with its platform for the members of the imperial household and a few others, the coming of the young Prince was feverishly awaited. He was now Napoleon IV., "holding in his hands," as he read in the next day's *Times*, "the Second Empire," and "only awaiting the opportunity to transform it into a Third." The heart of the Boy of Chislehurst leapt with an indescribable joy as he read on: "The Second Empire was overthrown by the Prussians and the Republicans, but its organization remains intact. In Paris they talk more than ever of the Empire and the Prince Imperial. They return unceasingly to the same topic, as if there were no other political prospect—as if beyond that there are only darkness and chaos."

Such was the amazing effect upon Printing House Square of the imperial fête.

While the Chislehurst festivities were at their height, the members of the National Assembly at Versailles were discussing the Prince's speech in reply to the address read at "Camden" by the Duc de Padoue. The Bonapartist manifesto—for such it was—had been telegraphed to Paris, and one of the organs of the party had printed it on its front page, in very large type, thus informing the million that Bonapartism was anything but dead, or even moribund. The Prince delivered this harangue in vibrating tones:

"In meeting here to-day you have been actuated by a sentiment of fidelity towards the memory of the

Emperor, and it is for that I wish, first of all, to thank you. The public conscience has avenged the calumnies on his great career, and sees the Emperor now in his true light. You who come from various parts of the country—you can bear this testimony. His reign was only a constant solicitude for the well-being of all. His last day on the soil of France was a day of heroism and abnegation of self. Your presence around me, the addresses which reach me in such great numbers, prove the inquietude of France as to her future destinies. Order is protected by the sword of the Duc de Magenta, and he will not leave the trust he has received exposed to party attacks. But material order is not security. The future remains unknown; interests are alarmed at it, and passions may abuse the opportunity. From this is born the sentiment of which you bring me the echo—that which draws opinion with an irresistible power towards a direct appeal to the nation to plant the foundations of a definitive Government. The *plébiscite* is the true salvation, and it is just—power rendered to authority, and the era of long security reopened to the country. It is a grand national resource, without conquerors or conquered, raising itself above all and bringing reconciliation. Will France freely turn her eyes to the son of Napoleon III. ? This thought awakens in me less of pride than of distrust of my capabilities. The Emperor has taught me how heavily weighs the Sovereign authority, even on stalwart shoulders, and how much self-reliance and the sentiment of duty are necessary to fulfil so high a mission. This faith makes up to me what is wanting in my youth. United to my mother by the most tender and most grateful ties of affection, I will work without ceasing to anticipate the progress of years. When the hour shall arrive, if another Government should gain the suffrages of the majority, I will bow down with respect before the decision of the country. If the name of the Napoleons should for the eighth time emerge from the

popular urns, I am ready to accept the responsibility which will be imposed upon me by the vote of the nation. These are my thoughts. I thank you for having traversed a long distance and come to receive my expression of them. Carry my memory to those who are absent, and to France the prayers of one of her children. My courage and my life belong to her. May God watch over her and restore to her her prosperity and her greatness !”

There was a storm of applause, with frantic shouts of “Vive Napoléon Quatre !” The crowd outside swelled the jubilant chorus.

The absence from the coming-of-age celebration of Prince (Jérôme) Napoleon and his sons was, of course, remarked. It was commented upon with shrugs of the shoulders and grimaces. I heard no particular expressions of regret—no wonder, for the burly Jérôme was always something of a spoil-sport, always at daggers drawn with the Empress, while maintaining cordial relations with the Prince Imperial. On the eve of the gathering, Paul de Cas-sagnac, who was invariably primed with attractive crumbs of information denied to less favoured purveyors of news, telegraphed from Chislehurst to his journal the appetizing morsel: “A final rupture has taken place between Prince Napoleon and the Empress and the Prince Imperial, through the refusal of the former to be present at Camden Place on the 16th.” How severely the fête had got on the nerves of the Government of the Republic (although President MacMahon must personally have been highly amused over the whole affair) was seen by the publication in London of a Paris telegram announcing, to the merriment of all those principally concerned, that the Minister for War was “about”

to issue yet another circular, declaring that no authorization would be granted to officers of the army to go to England, "even after the 16th of March !"

A few days before this event the French Government had issued a warning circular with intent to dissuade people from taking part in the manifestation. But this was of no avail ; and it was humorously said on the boulevards that there was no "demonstration" in Paris for the very good reason that there were no Bonapartists left in the capital. They had all gone to Chislehurst ! There was, in fact, only one conspicuous absentee — Prince Napoleon. For that truly Bonapartist figure we looked around in vain. His absence was thus explained by a sympathizing friend, signing himself "A Republican" :

"In writing the following, I express with full authority the views of Prince Napoleon on the gathering at Chislehurst. If the demonstration at Camden House (*sic*) had not, from the very commencement, assumed the character of an Imperialist manifesto, and if the name and policy of Prince Napoleon (Jérôme) had not been for some months past the mark for coarse vituperation on the part of those whose counsels are followed at Chislehurst, it would have been unnecessary to trouble you with these lines.

Adhering to the democratic and anti-clerical policy which he has always maintained, Prince Napoleon finds himself in entire opposition to those men whose influence proved so fatal to France under Napoleon III., and whose counsels to-day differ but little from the advice tendered to the Comte de Chambord by the supporters of Legitimacy. Several French and English journals have named the Prince Napoleon as intending to be present at Camden House. While it is almost needless to contradict this rumour, it may not be inappropriate to point out to the English

public how bitter have been the reproaches offered in the *Pays* (the mouthpiece of the Chislehurst Council) against Prince Napoleon, because, true to his ancient professions, he met halfway those of the French democracy, who, remembering that France existed before party, sought in a thorough union of Frenchmen to avoid the reinauguration rôle of the White Flag with which France was recently threatened. Attacked by the Royalists of all shades—Legitimist, Orleanist, and Rouherian—because he affirms the happiness of France as of higher import than the personal claims of any ‘dynasty,’ Prince Napoleon repeats to-day his lifelong affirmation, and refuses to mix with those whose counsels to Prince Louis at Chislehurst are pregnant with possible consequences of the most disastrous character. What France needs is the aid of her ablest men to pilot her through a period the troubles of which have not ceased; and she has need to be relieved from the constant conspiracies of those who urge to the front either effete-ness or inefficiency in the name of a family or a dynasty.”

Shortly after this coming-of-age fête at Chislehurst, the inmates of Camden Place were jubilant at the election (subsequently annulled) of M. de Bourgoing for the Department of the Nièvre. This gentleman had been an equerry of Napoleon III., and he defeated his Republican opponent by more than 5,000 votes. It was a momentous event, and temporarily filled the hearts of the exiles with great hopes. A circular issued on the occasion of the election left no doubt that an agitation of considerable proportions was being carried on in the interests of the Bonapartist dynasty, although M. Rouher disclaimed all knowledge of the existence of any imperialist “committees.” In the face of this disclaimer, an imperialist journal, *L’Abeille des Pyrénées*, asserted that there was a “committee” in

Paris and one in every department. Pamphlets and newspapers, advocating an appeal to the people and eulogizing "Napoleon IV.," were distributed right and left, as were photographs of the Woolwich cadet, now in his nineteenth year and cultivating a moustache. Marshal MacMahon, then President, declared, to the general surprise, that he would not allow this kind of thing to continue. It had been a subject of discussion that, whereas a newspaper called *L'Union* had been suspended for a fortnight for publishing a manifesto of the Comte de Chambord, signed "Henri V.," the Prince Imperial's Chislehurst address had been allowed to circulate everywhere. It may be noted in passing that about this time (1874) there died that remarkable polemist, M. Beulé, who had published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, before the fall of the Empire, a series of scathing studies of the Cæsars, in which he pleasantly compared Napoleon III. to the Emperors Caligula and Domitian.

Although Prince Jérôme Napoleon was in open conflict with the Empress, and also with the party as a whole, it must not be forgotten that his imperial cousin, Napoleon III., frequently consulted him, had a high opinion of his great natural ability, and, generally speaking, maintained his friendship with him. The Prince and his sister, Princesse Mathilde, had both stoutly opposed the Emperor's marriage, and this hostility to her had, naturally, not predisposed the Empress to regard favourably those two principal members of her consort's family. It should be remembered, too, that Prince Napoleon, upon the Emperor's death, regarded himself, and not without reason, as the head of the House. Moreover, immediately after the receipt of the tragic news from the

Cape, M. Rouher, asked at Chislehurst by M. Montjoyeux, "Who will take the place of the Prince Imperial?" replied, "Prince Jérôme, if he will accept the heavy burden."

"It will be very difficult for the Prince to reconcile his past acts and words with the exigencies imposed upon him by the future," observed Montjoyeux.

M. Rouher rejoined: "Certain men have not the right to shirk responsibilities imposed upon them by Fate."

This, it is true, is anticipating events. I have, however, interpolated this brief conversation in order to make it clear that, however much M. Rouher may have differed from Prince Napoleon in 1874, the "Vice-Emperor" was clearly of opinion in 1879 that Jérôme was the legitimate successor of the Prince Imperial, whose will, nominating Prince Victor as the chief of the party, had not at the time in question been opened.

This birthday gathering, at which the *fine fleur* of the Bonapartist party assisted, was notable as being the only occasion on which the French Government attempted to interfere with the festivities or solemnities at Chislehurst. First came the warning circular to the *Préfets*, and next the Minister for War addressed this letter to all the generals who had requested permission to visit England about the time of the coming-of-age fête:

VERSAILLES,
March 4, 1874.

GENERAL,

I have the honour to inform you that, in accordance with your request, you are authorized for a period of eight days to absent yourself from Paris,